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## A Study in Paths, Passions, and Persistence

Brianna Moore

*Loyola Marymount University*

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**A Study in Paths,  
Passions, and Persistence**

**Brianna Moore**

**In partial fulfillment of  
the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance**

**Loyola Marymount University**

**May 5, 2006**

**Thesis Advisor: Jill Nunes Jensen**

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During the past few years at Loyola Marymount University, I have learned the dance world is not for everyone. Knowing that everyone trains differently, with their own levels of focus and determination, I came to this project with the intention of discovering how young dance students ages 18-25, differ in their approaches to dance. How does their place of study, whether it be a university setting or a private studio, affect how they study dance in Southern California? I wanted to understand why one dancer decides to go to college and train, while another believes there is no need attend college to make it as a professional. Are there career benefits for the dancer who graduates from a prestigious university, when compared to the dancers who simply hold high school diplomas?

Agents in the commercial world have described the professional dance world to be about whom you know, and the connections you make. It is about how you work, and how you take class. Staying strong throughout daily criticism, and negative comments builds character.

At first I had intended to interview every dancer possible. I wanted to talk to dancers from several universities around the country, as well as those in the major professional dancers studios on both coasts. However, with the limited time I was allotted, and obvious geographic restrictions, I had to narrow down my research. Significantly I decided to only interview students from the dance department at LMU, as well as studio dancers from the Edge Performance Arts Center. As the process began, and I had the university interviews underway, I struggled with finding studio dancers. There were certain individuals who were enthusiastic about helping me find dancers to interview. I continued to wait, and continued to ask about when these meetings would happen, and the ones who had seemed so eager to help suddenly lost touch.

I ended up interviewing dance majors and minors at LMU. I went into the process



believing there would be a big difference between each individuals ideas of becoming a professional. I assumed I would find dancers in the university dedicated to the art form and determined to make it in the dance world, as well as dancers extremely focused on what they need to do next, knowing without a doubt what is it that they need to do in order to succeed. I discovered that this project was more of a self-discovery than anything else. I learned more about myself, and my goals as a dancer, by simply listening to the stories of others. I interviewed students with experience in both the university and studio setting. Most of the dancers interviewed felt it is extremely important to dance at a studio while in school. I assumed these individuals would believe their university setting to be a little more friendly and welcoming than that of a studio. This is because while at university, dancers are working together to achieve similar goals (concert work and graduation). In the studio environment the dancers are competing against one another for the next big job.

I asked my interviewees several questions, continuing with the idea of the different approaches in the different locations. For example, what types of dance is studied and where? Is the university setting the right place to study hip-hop? Is the studio setting, (such as the Edge Performing Arts Center), the right place to focus on more serious dance training? Does the university dancer know how to market herself? Do all university dancers take classes at outside studios away from campus? Are we influenced to think and feel a certain way depending on the place where we train? Do our teachers shape not only the dancer we become, but the person we become? Do university dancers get the same amount of personal attention as that of a studio dancer?

I had a set of approximately twelve questions to ask each individual, although when I

interviewed each individual, as the conversation progressed, I sometimes veered away from the list of questions- asking things to follow up on the way that the previous question was answered. I set up personal interviews with students in the dance department at Loyola Marymount University. These talks were recorded on my video camera in order to keep a personal record of what was said. I took notes throughout each interview to highlight what I believed to be the most important things said by each interviewee. I used the interviews as my main research for this project, along with a few other sources found in various books and articles. Though I will keep the thoughts of each individual anonymous to spare the feelings and keep ideas personal, after I concluded the interviews I decided to categorize the dancers based on their responses. The interviewees fell into five different sections which I will explore in this paper. The sections are: I. Stifled by the School Setting, II. The Academic Personality, III. A Limited Range of Options, IV. Technical Training and the Dancer, and V. Strategic Planning: School as a Tool.

**I.) Stifled by the school setting:**

Several dancers approach their first year in the dance program, at Loyola Marymount University, unsure of whether they really want to pursue a career in dance. One might wonder why an individual would choose to go to college majoring in dance, when they are not positive they want to pursue this field of study. It does not seem to make much sense, yet, it is very true. I have come to hear this story time and time again. With that being said, many continue to come here and find a love for dance that, either they are discovering for the first time, or simply, they are reminded of this passion once again. Dancers come to college, take class, and realize that dance can be a reality for them. If they put their mind to it, they will be able to achieve great things in the dance world. However, it is not that easy for everyone. Others arrive at LMU with a love, and a passion for dance that is more than ever before, and once they start, they seem to leave with very different feelings.

I interviewed a young women who has plenty of experience with this. She was shy, and she did not talk much. She was a little uncomfortable with the video camera, and with the set up of questions. Since I sensed this in her, I decided to put the camera off to the side, put my list of questions down, and simply have a one on one conversation. I have taken class with her several times over the past four years, and I have learned many of her patterns as she approaches each class. Experiencing her standing in the back of the room, and not always dancing to what I believe to be her full potential. Because of the way the interview began, and the background information I already knew on her, the wheels in my head were quickly turning about the person I believe her to be. I wanted to write her story. I wanted to be able to say that we had the same

story. Through her initial interview, I discovered that I am not so sure that I love dance either. Before college I was positive I wanted to pursue a career in dance, but as college is quickly coming to an end I am not so sure. In this section, I have been able to use the interviewees responses as a way to help figure things out about my own passion for dance.

Watching the recent student dance concert tears ran down my face as I sat in the audience for the second half of the show. I thought that my performance might actually be the last time my family will ever see me dance, and that maybe I was not good enough. Maybe it was my last time, and I still thought other dancers were much better than me. I cried because, for the first time, I wondered if this was something I really wanted, or something I was using to prove myself. I worried that maybe I kept myself going by never being good enough. People did not think I was good, and so, I had to take more classes, and tell myself to work harder, and maybe, just maybe, by the time it came to the next performance, I would be better. Although, as each performance rolled around I did not feel any “better” than the one before. If I look at this from a different angle, I see that maybe I am not good enough, because I am scared to be good enough, I am scared to lead the life of a dancer. I worry that I want to go home, and that I do not want to live this lifestyle, but that it is simply, me wanting to prove to all those around me that I can do this. People who have not seen me dance since high school would wonder why I went to school for four years to study dance, and then not pursue it afterwards. I fear that they would not only think that I was not good enough to ever make it in this industry, but also, that I was never smart enough to study anything else. I worry, I worry, I worry. All that worry, and all that fear, I tried to find in the eyes of the woman who I interviewed.

I discovered, we had very different stories to tell, we are not the same person. Although I was able to find similarities, there were many differences between the two of us. She hated dance because of the grades, and she hated dance because of the way in which it is approached at the university setting. But, she also hated it because of the fear, “I compare myself to everybody else, and I get scared. I’m scared of failing, so I don’t want to try”, she explained, as I seemed to know that story all too well. You do not want to try, because the thought of not succeeding is way too scary an idea. The things she disliked about dance, she only started to not like once she got to LMU. The things I did not like about dance, I have not liked all along. I was never graded in dance before LMU, although I always felt that I was. It was not about getting a grade, as much as it was about getting approval. Approval from the teacher, approval from my peers, and approval from the people who would come to support me, and watch me dance. I guess, in a way, I wanted to see the same story in her. This would give me more of an understanding of my own ideas, and a more solid belief that my viewpoints were valid. I have found that it takes a certain type of person to listen to criticism day after day, and it takes some thick skin to be able to not take corrections so personally. I love dance more than anything, yet sometimes I find myself too sensitive to be in this industry. Although, whenever I seem to get really down on myself, it does not take too long before I am reminded of why I do this, and why I love it. I think that right there is this is the difference between the student I interviewed and myself; I do not believe she has had those moments of remembering why. She burnt herself out a long time ago.

A teacher of mine has helped me to think about the decisions that I make every single day of my life. She forces me to analyze the way I think, and the way I feel about every little detail of

myself. Additionally, she has forced me to face my feelings, and because of that, I think that she, along with the interviews I held, have helped me to grow. To be able to look into the eyes of others, and discover what was in mine all along. The interviewee might not want to make it as a dancer, as much as I do, or they might want it even more, however, it is hard to ever really know.

I always wonder what it feels like in another persons body when they dance. If others experience the same overwhelming feeling, of pure joy flowing through their body when they perform a lyrical piece, that I experience. Does my experience mean that I love it, does that mean that I am meant to do this? What about all the times that I have come back to my dorm room crying the last four years? All the times I wanted to change my major? And all the times I dreaded going to certain classes? Do those questions mean that I hate it? Do we need to be happy all the time to love something such as dance? Do we need to be enjoying what we are doing at all times? Do I keep on this road of dance, because of those times that I experience the feeling of loving what I am doing so much, that I never want to stop? I do not know how to even begin to answer these questions. How will we ever know how someone feels when dancing? I can hardly explain my feelings aloud to another dancer, let alone another non-dancer. Even if one individual feels one way, and another feels the exact same way, they might explain it as something different, never knowing that the feeling inside is mutual. To me, this experience is like the color red. At a very young age, all of us are taught that when we see this color, we know to call it red. We put a name to what is seen. However, what if the color my eyes see is really a different shade, or even a different color, than the person next to me? We will see two different things, yet we will both put the same name to what is seen, because that is how we are taught. Being at a university, students

are sometimes taught these automatic responses as well. Individuals learn by hearing others explain over and over, why we come to college to study dance. Not everyone may feel the same exact way, but when asked the question most will give a similar response. People learn how to respond to questions like, what exactly is modern dance? What is lyrical? Is jazz only done to real “jazz” music? I have been asked them all many times before. One usually describes modern as being more natural for the body. But what if you never feel that modern is natural in your body? What if jazz is actually more natural in ones body? Why do you have to answer that way? Why do we feel we are molded into the same people? Maybe the young woman I interviewed does continue to enjoy dance as much as the next, but when she tries to fit into these ideals she cannot. I find that dancers sometimes let others define themselves. When one is told that they are this or that on a regular basis, they will most likely begin to believe it.

What I did not seem to notice when interviewing this dancer, were the people in the background. However, when I went back to view the tape I saw how she noticed them. She seemed to look around to see who was there, and you can tell on the tape how she was watching what she said. If I could interview her again, which I did get the chance to do, I would pick a location off-campus for the interview. Because after saying how she did not like dance anymore, and have not enjoyed the last four years, when asked her thoughts on the program, she responded by saying, “I’m not disappointed. I think it’s a *great* program, there’s a *great* variety of teachers. The classes are fun, and...you learn a lot, especially with the more academic dance classes, Kinesiology, and those types of things, it’s really great. I just, it’s just, the dance major was not the right major for me.” One might wonder why she would stick it out for so long? Why would

she continue as a dance major, and continue to think highly of the program, is she, herself, was not happy here?

She explained to me that she has her eye on graduation, and that she never really thought of coming to college. Once she got here all she could think about was graduation day and being handed her diploma. She became literally obsessed with the idea of graduating. But that, that is about the only thing keeping her going with dance these days. This is because she has grown to “hate” dancing in the academic setting. If she could go back in time she would have chose another major, something along the lines of psychology.

I asked her if her peers motivate her to achieve higher goals. She thought, “the people here would if it wasn’t for being an academic setting. If it (were) the same teachers, and the same class work and everything like that, without the grades and the pressure, then I think it would. But it’s too overwhelming”, continuing on to say, “I guess I don’t like dancing for a grade at all. It sort of destroys the whole point of it for me.” I asked if this is something she has come to not like anymore, and she responded by saying, “yeah, it’s more like a chore. It’s something I have to get through to get a degree, so I can go home.”

Before coming to college she claims to have danced “seven days a week, totaling close to forty, forty-five hours” inside the studio walls. It was all she did, and all that she wanted to do. Nothing made her happy the way that dancing did. In fact, she dropped out of high school to pursue dance more fully. She got her high school diploma through another state where she was able to get credit for both dancing, and teaching dance. She worked professionally as a dancer, dancing in a modern company, which was formed by a teacher from her studio. And she could



not see herself being happier doing anything else.

When she got to college things began to change. She began being graded on her dancing, and she began to hate it more and more. She thought that putting dance in an academic setting took the joy out of it. For the first time, she began to become intimidated by those around her. She found herself not dancing the same as when she was home. She no longer has the dreams of being a famous dancer. Now, she would rather go back home and be a teacher of dance. She wants to instill the love of dancing in young children the way she was taught growing up. She wants to go home and leave the LA life behind her. Realizing that she was here to be taught, “mostly (about) being able to communicate what (she is) trying to teach, or what (she is) trying to do, or, the teaching style that (she is) using.”

I continued to have more questions for her. I wanted to know if I could ask additional questions that might spark a different response. Or, if I interviewed her in a different location, away from school, she might respond differently. Because why? Seriously, why would one stay with something that was causing this much pain? She told me, that the most important thing she learned, was to “research something before you get stuck doing it. Don’t stick with something if you don’t enjoy it.” In the second interview with this dancer, I asked why she continued to stick with it, if she had learned this. She explained, she “hoped that if I just gave myself time I would start to love dancing again”. I believe that sometimes the human being sticks with something, because they continue to have hope for future change. Individuals believe, if they continue down this road, and keep doing what they are doing, great things will come. Dancers constantly reach for more. And when one never wants to experience failing, they continue with what they set out

to pursue in the first place; in hopes that things will soon turn around, and they will become a success. Through this interview I came to find my passion for dance once again. I know that they are times I truly do not like dance, but I know that I when I find the joy in what I am doing, it has the capability to overpower my concerns and fears as a dancer.

**II.) The academic personality:**

The next two students I interviewed both have a very studious side. They enjoy learning. Which is the main reason why they are here, studying at LMU. Both girls appear to be ahead in the department; both are graduating in three years, and both are very prepared for the professional world. I have no doubt in my mind that either of them will make it in this industry. I asked each individually if they ever thought of not going to college, and before I could even finish the question both of them had responded with a yes. One student told me, "Yeah, I was like why should I? Because for this to be a profession you just have to go for it. There won't always be that opportunity for you." The other student responded by saying, "Yeah. Especially the summer on dance with a force." This is a program that takes a select few, competition dancers, and brings them out to LA, in order to spend the summer training intensely with working professionals. She was the youngest out of the group, about fifteen years old at the time. There was one girl who was 22, although, probably half of them were just out of high school, and these kids were moving out here to start working professionally. She felt, "well hey, I can do that if they're all doing this." Continuing on, she explained, "just when I was that young, and to be getting the attention I was getting, I thought I might not need to go to school. Maybe it would be better if I came and did this right away, and don't lose the pace that I'm on by taking time out to go to school. But ultimately, I am an academic person, and I do love school, and I just couldn't give that up. And I'm really glad I didn't."

I keep going back and fourth with what I think about this issue. If I was in either one of their shoes, and I felt I was good enough right out of high school, would I think about not going

to a university? And I think I would. I have to say, I'm a little worried that if I was in that position I would not have come here. I do not fully enjoy sitting in the classroom, and I'm not as much of an academic person as these two. It would have been harder for me to make this decision. But I'm glad I did. As difficult as it has been for me during certain times throughout my college career, I believe it would have been that much harder if I did not have an education.

When I think about all this, knowing what I know now, I would have been crazy to not come here. I have found that, college is not just about academics, it is not solely about what you read in books. Rather, it is about finding yourself and discovering who you are. It is about growing up, maturing, and making the jump from childhood to adulthood. It is about leaving home, and learning how to be independent; learning how to survive on your own. And when you are a dancer, you have those four years to test the waters. You are given the opportunity to see into the professional world, without having to be thrown into it at 17 or 18 years old.

A lot of times young kids move out after high school, trying to make it in this industry, while many of my interviewees expressed seeing dancers "get overwhelmed way too quickly." Most spend years in the professional studio before booking work, and kids coming from studios where they were once *the best* do not seem to understand this. I know for me, I could not have handled the industry at 17 years old. It is hard enough for me four years later. College gives you that extra time. It gives you time to figure out your life, and to figure if this is something you truly want to pursue as a career. I have learned how to be a whole person. To get involved, and enjoy every moment. I learned how to be myself, rather than trying to be what everyone else expects or wants me to be. I learned to do what makes me happy, and as long as I do that, I will

be successful in life. I learned to value those around me, and listen to what they have to offer. I have learned, but have not conquered, the idea of taking risks, and not being scared of everything. Some days I find myself more scared than others, but I simply have to keep reminding myself of these things which I have learned.

These girls have both have had the opportunity to work professionally while simultaneously going to school. They have spent the last three years networking, meeting people, and keeping their options open. When asked what they wanted for their career, neither one could stop talking. "I want to do everything" they both stated. Commercial, contemporary work, Broadway, etc.etc. They both made it very clear, that if a dancer wants to make it in this world, they need to be outside taking class. I asked one of the girls if she believed the university setting to be the *right* place to study hip-hop or commercial dance, she responded by saying, she thought it could be. That compared to other dance programs, she thought of LMU as "extremely versatile, and open to various styles of dance, aside from modern and ballet, which seems to be the stereotype for institutional dance." Although, she does not think that the university is quite there, as far as offering what her training outside has offered her. Because in the three years which she has been a student at LMU, she has consistently taken class outside of the school. Believing that "even if LMU did have the best hip-hop teacher here, that's one teacher...over and over." Which is great, because the student is given the chance to be able to perfect that one style. Yet, this dancer made it clear that she wants to be able to do everyone's style. She continued to explain to me, that "there's a million different styles of hip-hop, a million different styles of jazz. So, to be able to take from as many different teachers as possible, and to be in the competitive

environment, I think is a huge deal.” However, this concept of commercial dance, would be difficult to fully bring into the university system. Many dancers agreed that, when one is out in the industry, auditioning, or even just taking class, there is a much greater feeling of competition, that is not felt as much in the University setting. LMU has a wonderful family dynamic about it, and because of that the competition is not heavily felt within the studios. This dancer told me, “when you go to class, (in a professional studio) it’s not just to feel good in your body” it is, “to catch people’s eye.” That competition is what makes training outside of LMU necessary for the dancer striving to make it in the commercial industry.

I agree with all that this dancer had to say. Getting a job in the dance industry, is much different than applying for a business career. Having a college degree on your resume does not have the same, or even close to, the same effect. The people casting the jobs simply want to see the individual dance, and see what they are able to do in that moment.

A teacher of mine explained to me, that people (casting directors, and other dance professionals) will not know about the four year journey I have taken at LMU. They will only see how I dance now, and compare that to the dancing of others, instead of being able to see, and to know, what my teachers here know. The casting directors do not know the little changes I have made each year. And because of that, I have to work that much harder to prove myself as a dancer.

I have observed, that sometimes dancers come to find the program at LMU a bit too laid back, and too comfortable. When I asked the other student, if she was disappointed with how the department ran, she has been a few times. Stating that she believes, “the professors here have

genuine concern for all the students, and they are very sincere...they take the humanistic approach when it comes to building relationships with the students, which is great. But, I don't think that they really prepare us for all that the professional world throws at us." Continuing on to explain, "realistically, when it comes to these performances, and these auditions, it is very cut throat anywhere you go. Either you have it or you don't. There's no compromise. There's no, let's be considerate of other people's feelings, they just give it to you hard core."

She seems to have a point. When students sit out half the semester, and never truly push themselves harder, from semester to semester, when does the department have enough? When do they talk to the individual about choosing a different career path? They do not. I guess they feel it is not their place. We are all adults, and we make the conscious decision to be here. So, if someone does not feel like working, it is only hurting themselves. It does not effect the dance careers of those around them. Although, when students choose to be lazy, and not want to work, but still continue to come and take class, these students tend to pull down the energy of the rest of the class.

The dancers who do not choose to come to a university to train, will have the same chance at success as the dancer with the degree. Although, they may have less time to grow up and mature. I think it is important to have both types of training under ones belt. The ability to learn about dance from an academic point of view, while also learning about dance simply by being in the studio with other professionals, and learning what the dancer needs to do in order to survive in this industry.

### **III.) A limited range of options:**

The next two students came to dance at the university level, simply because there was not an option to not go to school. These individuals would have loved to start working professionally straight from high school, however, their parents had a different idea.

I asked a dance major his thoughts on coming to college. He stated, "There were never thoughts of not going to college, but not for personal reasons really. I knew as a performer there are different roads to take, and people have different opinions on it, but for me and my family education is really a big deal and tradition." This student explained how both his parents went to college, as well as their brothers and sisters. Going to college was never a question, it was just the next step in this individual's education. I too, grew up with the same ideas about college. I always knew that one's education is not complete until one graduates from college. I never thought I was smart enough for college, but I knew I was going to make it happen somehow. This dancer explained his decision to come to the university to train in various styles of dance, and how he feels about the program now that he has experienced it for almost four years. LMU has "given me the technique and focus that I need, for my particular needs as a dancer. Because, I didn't come in with jazz experience, or too much ballet, or modern experience at all. So, that's why the dance program at LMU seemed right for me." He feels he is a good dancer, but thought college would allow him to buy a few extra years of training and experience. He believes that his college experience has helped him make connections with others in the dance world. If he had not gone to college, he would have "met other people, (yet), it just wouldn't have afforded (him) the opportunity to see what other worlds there were, as far as modern dance goes, as far as



theatrical performance goes, and stuff like that”.

Another dancer explained, “I think I always wanted to go to college. Because I figured I can only dance for so long. So, at some point I’m going to want some form of a higher education, even if it’s still in dance... you want to be able to handle your business in whatever you’re doing.” She is one of the few dancers I interviewed who has really thought about her future, and what to do if dance does not work out the way she hopes. I believe this dancer has an extremely realistic approach to what she aspires to achieve in the entertainment industry. She went on to explain her ideas, stating, “Eighteen was a little too young to start doing stuff like that. Plus my parents have always wanted me to go to college.” This dancer knew she was not ready for the dance world, and so did her parents. However, they also knew that she can only be successful for so many years in the desired profession. She expressed how she thought, that one ends up being more mature about their dancing when coming to a university to train, because they have had four years to focus on themselves as an artist, while simultaneously focusing on getting an education. This student felt, “you end up more mature in general. Instead of going straight from high school and moving into a career.” This dancer was represented by an agency for awhile while high school. It was a small agency in her home town focused on modeling, dancing, and acting. She was given more modeling work than anything else, explaining that there was not much opportunity for dance in the community. Yet, she left the agency, because she “figured (she) would want to focus on school more before (she) did anything with an agent”. Finishing up her second year at LMU, this student has not found the time to go back to being represented by an agency, but hopes to sometime before she graduates. Out of all she has learned being in

college thus far, what stood out the most, was the idea to “take each moment as it is.” This dancer believes that an individual begins a class a different person than the person who walks out of the class. She continued on to explain, that when the dancer attends the same class two days later, or the next week, they are a different dancer once again. Because of this, she has learned to “take that hour and a half...and dance as much as you can, dance to your fullest within that class. So, (as to) not leaving anything, or regretting that you wished you had put more into it, or learned more from that class.” The university setting has helped her to learn more about herself, how she approaches a class, and how she is able to grow from each and every lesson taught. When one is dancing in the studio setting they have much more of a choice in which teachers to take from. However, in the university setting, sometimes one has to take class from teachers who they do not necessarily care for. Which allows a student to “learn from different teachers, even classes you don’t like, and teachers you don’t like that much, (and to) be able to pick out the good things, and not get negative about it.” The university setting forces the dancer to step outside of their comfort zone, and take classes they might not have chosen for themselves in the first place.

Most of the time, the idea of attending a university, for the individual who wants to pursue a career in the arts/entertainment industry, can be a scary thought. Especially with the dancer. Some feel that by the time they complete the average four years of college education, they are then too old to begin with this field of work. I talked to a young dancer trying to make her way in the dance world. This individual is twenty-two years old and has been dancing for the last fifteen. She never went to college, and when asked if she ever planned on attending college, she simply said no. She explained her feelings on dancing at the university level, she stated, “If

you want to be successful in LA a degree won't get you that far, other than furthering your knowledge of dance. It's all about connections, getting in with people, and getting seen. If you want to become a professional dancer, find the time to get out to Hollywood, take class, get an agent, and start now! The younger the better out here!" When asked of her career goals, she first responded by saying, "to make money", and then went on to explain that her "biggest focus right now is commercials and TV work for both dancing and acting". And when asked what will happen if she becomes hurt or sick, and is no longer able to dance. This individual confidently said, "I'll figure that out when it happens. I am a creative person and very driven to be successful. I'm not worried."

During these interviews, as well as many other conversations throughout the year, with dancers and teachers, in both the university setting, and the studio setting, I have found that almost everyone feels a need to defend their decision on attending or not attending college. The dancers who are studying at the university feel they have to support their reasons for getting a degree. Explaining how much more mature they will be, and how much more knowledge they will have of themselves, and their body, than the dancer who did not receive this form of higher education. They understand that after graduation, they will be older than most commercial dancers striving to make it in this industry, and sometimes less prepared for what to expect from the competitive side of things. On the other hand, the dancer, even the very successful dancer, without the degree in hand, feels they too need to defend their decision. They do not want to be looked down upon for their decision, and so, they feel a need to explain to others how the industry works, and how they will figure out what to do next after their career has come to an

end. I discovered, that whether a student really wants to continue on with their education for themselves, a parent decides that for them, or a individual does not see the practicality in the education in order to fulfill their lifelong dreams as a dancer, most feel it is appropriate to explain the decision that was made.

#### **IV.) Technical training and the dancer:**

There are many different reasons why one might choose to attend Loyola Marymount University with an emphasis in dance studies. Individuals apply for the program hoping to eventually teach, choreograph, or even perform professionally. However, some are not sure what avenue they will follow, yet, while they are here studying, they plan to soak in as much technical training as possible. One dancer believed the biggest benefit of university dance training is the variety of classes offered. She explained that one has the opportunity to “take so many classes a day.” “And you’re graded, so you feel you have to come, you have to be disciplined.” Some dancers in the department love the idea of having to come to class in order to prove themselves to the faculty. The four dancers I will discuss in this section, did not decide to pursue a professional career in dance, until studying at LMU.

Interviewee #1 told me that it was during her first year that she decided to pursue dance. Explaining her decision was, “mostly just because, (she) saw that it could maybe be possible,” Continuing on to say, “I found more (of) a connection, I saw it as more tangible to (pursue) dance as more than just a hobby”. She told me, “At first I was actually considering a sociology major, just ‘cause I thought I could never actually major in dance. I thought I had to do something more academic, you know. I was already thinking about what I was going to do after college.” However sitting down and having a conversation with Department Chair, Judy Scalin seemed to change her mind. Interview #1 describe her experience with Scalin. She told me, “if (dance) is something that you love, and something that you really want to do, then do it.” This individual does not exactly remember all that was said that day, but she remembered being so moved, that

she took the chance on dance as a major. Once an actual college student, and dance major, she began to become more comfortable with the idea, and she saw that she “could really do it!”

Interviewee #1 takes it one day at a time. She pushes herself to work harder each new day in the studio, believing that challenging herself in every technique class will help her make it as a dancer.

Interviewee #2 believes technique is her biggest weakness as a dancer, and that is the number one reason she is here. She plans to use the technique classes as a tool to get her to the next step, which she cannot yet identify. Explaining, “I’m not quite sure what road I’ll take with dance, I don’t know if I’ll be able to dance professionally, that’s what I want to do, but I think it is important to get as much education as you can”. Interviewee #2 said she really enjoys modern, and she feels “horrible” in ballet class. She choose this school to be able to study a variety of different things, and take as many classes as possible. When asked what benefits she thinks she will have in the dance world, having come to college, she felt that at the end of her four years here she would simply be a smarter dancer. She expressed that she has learned to know what is “right for (her) body, and not just doing what the choreographer wants”, only a freshman here at LMU she has already began to learn, “about different aspects of dancing...analyzing, and understanding (dance), instead of just experiencing it”.

I was surprised by interviewee #2's reaction when asked what she would do if something happened and she could no longer dance. She paused for awhile, before speaking. She expressed how that idea never crossed her mind, going on to say, “I would try to do something with it. I don’t know, I would go crazy if I couldn’t do anything with it. With dance, I mean it depends

how bad it is, I would try to still choreograph, I really love choreographing.” For someone who is pursuing this as a career, witnessing injuries occurring day in and day out, it was hard for me to understand a dancer who had never once thought about this. She continued to pause, and then repeated the statement, “Um, you know, I really don’t know. I never thought about that. I don’t know.” She is here for the training, and here to work towards improving herself, and yet, she never believed something could happen. Interviewee #2’s optimistic view of the industry seemed to be her most prominent strength. She kept stressing the fact that she was here to work towards improving her technique, although, it appeared to me that she has enough self-belief to truly be able to make it in this industry.

My third interviewee had a very different story to tell. She came to college as a theater major with no plans of majoring in dance. Once a college freshman she decided to sign up for a ballet class, “I was very worried about gaining the freshman fifteen, so, that made me want to dance. Also, I thought ballet would be a great way to release the stresses that come with college.” As the year went on, interviewee #3 was surprised when “asked to be in Scott’s ballet piece in the faculty concert, which (she) didn’t even audition for.” She seemed to really enjoy the dance department, it was her escape from the theater crowd, and so, the next semester she added a jazz class, as well as picking up a minor in dance. Her reason for minoring was to be able to take dance classes for zero credit, while continuing on with her main emphasis in the theater department. She explained that she was, “anti-major for awhile. I thought the (dance) majors took what they did for granted.” As interviewee #3 grew to find a love and a passion for dance that had been missing in her for years, she decided she might as well make dance her major. She

expressed to me, when it was that she decided to move forward with dance. She explained that her “defining moment” of wanting to pursue dance as more than just a hobby, came once she was already in college. In a dance conference with her ballet teacher, Tekla Kostek. Interviewee #3 was asked where she wanted her career to go. Still, with a smile on her face, as she glowed talking about this experience, she said, “I couldn’t believe she asked that, and for the first time I felt that this was possible.” She believes that she could not survive without dancing, it is the thing which keeps her grounded. Discovering that a dance career, is an option for her, made interviewee #3 re-shape her future plans and career aspirations. Dance is not just something that she does, it is something for which she has found a passion. Interviewee #3 no longer “anti-major”. Studying at LMU has helped her improve her technique, while making up for all the time (that she believes) she lost when dance was no longer in her life. She works hard today to dance better tomorrow.

Starting at a young age, interviewee #4 had thoughts of not going to college. Rather than attending a university, she had dreams of moving to New York and becoming a professional ballerina. Yet, knew if she did not attend school, her parents would no longer fund her living expenses. Once she reached the high school age, interviewee #4 discovered that college would be a more realistic option for her. As she continued to get more involved with modern dance, she came to learn that the technical training in college would be better and more sophisticated, then what she was used to in Minnesota. Since coming to LMU, interviewee #4 has learned that dance is definitely what she wants to pursue, in whatever way that she can. She expressed to me, that she would like to hopefully be able to work professionally, but that she would even work “with a



pre-professional, or an amateur company, for free, or non-profit...it's just that I decided that I would rather (dance) than anything else." Interviewee #4 is here at LMU to concentrate on bettering her technique, at the same time as making connections with those around her in this field of work. She has not had the chance to get off campus and take class, though she is inspired by the department faculty, and has future aspirations of working with a few of them.

Technique is not all there is to it, however it is what keeps these three interviewees returning to the studio day after day. Technique is what drives them to be better, more accomplished dancers, and it is here, at LMU, that they feel is the most beneficial place (at this time) to work towards achieving their dreams in the dance world. As interviewee #2 put it, when asked what her career goals were, "I'm going to be a dancer. A really good one, very successful."

**V.) Strategic planning: school as a tool:**

As I mentioned before, I think it is rare for an individual to arrive at college with a blueprint of their future, and then continue to stick by that plan. Many adults in my life has a career that is not connected to their college major. Yet four of the students I interviewed claimed to have known from the start what they truly wanted from their education. These dancers never seemed to question what they wanted for themselves. They came to LMU as dance majors, with a desire to learn as much about the art form as possible, and yet this group of dancers did not seem to stress the importance of actually dancing professionally. All four interviewees hope that they will someday be given the opportunity of a professional dance career, however, “making it” or “not making it” professionally does not seem to be the way in which to rank the success of these individuals. Rather, their success will come from educating others, from teaching the world through the eyes of the dancer.

The first interviewee in this section told me how she has always wanted to study dance at a completely different level than anything studio based, or competition team dancing. Stating, “I am so hungry to learn dance, in ways I haven’t even thought of yet.” This dancers feels that because dance is an art, people seem to look past it, most believing dance to be nothing more than a hobby. Being a person who has always loved learning, she has been able to find that there is so much more to the art of dance than the average person might think, and that is the reason why she loves studying it. This dancer understands that in the entertainment industry no one really cares about your degree, as she put, “they (casting directors, agents, etc.) are not looking at a dancers knowledge of the femur, you know, the things we are educated about here.” Although,

at this moment in time she is not pursuing a entertainment career, explaining, “my main focus is trying to teach correctly...and to teach from a more in depth view point, (dance) is not just moving around.” This dancer feels that most people think dance is simply a way a exercise, they think “it is just these skinny people jumping up and down”, which, although those do seem to be stereotypical views on the act of dancing itself, interviewee feels strongly about teaching others to understand all the knowledge there lies within this art form. She feels that “dance can be used as a huge educational tool, and a communication tool,” that would “make students feel more intelligent an better about themselves. She expressed her main goal is to be able to stimulate her students, allowing them to “feel good about themselves, and what they look like, and how they feel when they are moving their body.” More than anything she wants to be a role model and an inspiration for her students.

There is a saying, those who can’t do, teach, and I am not so sure I agree with that saying. The best kind of teacher, is the teacher who is truly invested in his/her students, and have the capability to inspire young minds. This first dancer thinks that in order to be a good dancer teacher, one needs to be extremely aware of their own dancing abilities. She expressed how the teacher needs to be aware of their own body, kinesphere, and “everything that scientifically goes on within yourself.” She explained that she is still in the process of learning about herself, and perceives that it will take her entire four years at LMU before she will actually be well aware, and be able to analyze and know herself completely. She expressed that if she is going to make corrections on a student’s body, she really wants to make sure that she knows what exactly is correct, not simply what she believes would look right. Continuing on to say that with injuries

occurring so much these days, she wants to make sure that when she is training young students she is “doing it in a way that’s healthy, but beneficial and challenging at the same time.”

Understanding, that being able to teach dance from a scientific viewpoint is a huge goal that she has set for herself, but she believes that she can achieve it.

The next interviewee choose this department with dance goals in mind, yet hardly any prior training. He had to choose a dance program that would accept him with the small amount of training he came in with. The department chair, was the main reason he made the decision to come to LMU, it was because of the person she was in their first meeting, as well as the atmosphere she created for each one of her students. This student plans on opening up his own studio, and sharing his love and passion for dance with others. Without much dance training before choosing to major in dance, he came here with the intention to be able to learn all that he could about dance, and then some day be able to open up a studio of his own, and share both his love and his passion for dance with others in the community. LMU has helped to shape his self-discovery, while learning how to work with other people.

Many dancers come to LMU wanting to work in the commercial field, mainly because that is the only type of dancing they have been introduced to prior to university studies, since most of these dancers are coming from convention/competition backgrounds. Although, the third dancer knew all along that she wanted to dance with a company, the commercial field never truly felt like something she wanted to pursue. Alvin Ailey has been one of the biggest influences in her life, and she has dreamt about performing with that company for years now. She has lived on the west coast her whole life, wanting to stay on this coast for college, she has since found a need

to be on the east coast, a need to go to New York. There are a lot of companies she is interested in, expressing the possibility of dancing with companies that may not consist of all black dancers, “I wanted to be in an all black dance company, but now I think that there may be some companies which aren’t all black, but could stand to have a little integration.” She explained she is really using college as her time to explore all her options, rather than being close minded to the ideas of being a performer, she has begun to think about teaching in a studio, teaching at the university level, and even starting her own dance company someday.

The third dancer had plans of being a double major with business early on in her college career. Now at the end of her junior year she explained she simply never got around to picking up that second major. This individual did not have big plans of actually working in the corporate world, however, she felt that the business course work would help her handle the “behind the scenes” aspects of running a dance company. Figuring out how to get it started, and then once it is started, how to maintain it. She told me that she has friends who are now starting their own businesses, and she feels she can keep those contacts, explaining, you “don’t just let them go to waste, you can collaborate, and help each other in certain ways.

Since being at college, the third dancer has learned, “that is really takes a lot of outside work to be successful at something...just scratching the surface of something will take you somewhere, but it will not get you to where you need to be.” She has discovered that if one really puts their mind to something, no matter what it is, they will be able to achieve their dreams.

At age seven, the fourth dancer I interviewed in this section, already knew what she wanted to do with her life. She sat her parents down at the dinner table, and said, “Mom, Dad, I

know you want me to go to school in Illinois, but I am going to New York when I graduate high school, and I am going to dance on Broadway.” And even though she is not living in New York as of right now, she told me that she still plans on eventually moving there, and believes she has stuck true to her dreams thus far.

Similar to the first dancer, this individual is very curious about teaching students the philosophy behind the art of dancing, believing “the body awareness isn’t out there in the studios, it isn’t being taught”. The competition studios across the country are all about the show right now, it is all about how things look, and what is going to win, “how many pirouettes can you do, how high can you leg kick...and if you’re hurting, how can you fake it, and still make the judges believe that you are the most amazing dancer ever.” This individual feels that these are all great qualities to have, they build a strong foundation in the dancer. However, coming to college she has really been able to learn about, and experience the art of dancing, “and using dance in other ways than just for pure entertainment.” She believes some dancers who move out here to pursue dance, and study at a studio like the Edge performing arts center, stay in the commercial world because they haven’t had the opportunity to be exposed to different experiences, and different realms of dance. “If you are only exposed to jazz, of course that’s what you want to do, because that’s all you know.”

The fourth dancer explained her career goals might be a little too mapped out, but that it is a good thing, because she knows when and how she will be able to achieve each goal. Before graduating with a BA in dance, this individual plans to receive pilates certification. She is also hoping to be able to do something with gyrokinesis and gyrotonics. “I want to work with

dancers...and be able to say, 'oh, you're ankle hurts, well obviously, look at the way you walk.'" Continuing on to say, "you know it all makes sense, the body moves, the body is meant to move, the body is meant to bend in certain ways, it's meant to take what we ask of it, but we have to do it intelligently, and we have to do it correctly." She is extremely interested in incorporating her knowledge of her body in with her passion for the art of dance. She expressed to me, that "yoga is the big craze, and pilates is a big craze, so people do it, because it is good for them, but they don't know why." Believing, it is really important to educate people, about themselves, about their bodies; "I think if we are able to use are bodies more, it will jump start our minds, and our creative juices." The first and fourth dancers had very similar ideas, and goals for themselves in the dance world. They both plan on re-educating the world by using the body.

Each of these four interviewees held very strong beliefs in the way in which the dance world operates, and each one of them wants to use what they know to bring about change in the industry. These dancers wish to be a part of the next generation of great teachers. Without the university education, these four dancers would not be able to pursue the same kind of success that they are now working towards achieving.

**VI.) Connecting with others in the dance community:**

In an article titled, "Preparing for Life after the Last Pirouette", Peter Monaghan describes his feelings on LEAP (Liberal Education for Arts Professionals): a fairly new program developed at St. Mary's College of California, which gives professional dancers the opportunity to receive a bachelor's degree within three years of part-time study. This program is comprised of much older dancers, who has already began, with some completed their professional dance careers.

Monaghan explains, "The college devised LEAP to accommodate the intense schedules of dancers while it helps them lay the groundwork for subsequent careers", (1). A dancer in the program, Ms. Maffre, believes dancers "minds are working all the time, so there is very much a need for intellectual investigation, to balance the physical activity" (2). The article explains that the professional dancer may not always have much academic schooling, ballet dancers begin their careers sometimes before finishing high school, however, even without the structured academics under way, these dancers, "excel in a disciplined, kinesthetic way of knowing, and they have an impressive capacity for memorization" (2). Most of the dancers who are a part of LEAP have danced with major professional companies, including the Joffrey Ballet, and the San Francisco Ballet, but not all these dancers have come from classical ballet backgrounds, several have professional musical theater backgrounds as well. Kathleen Martuza, a member of the corps de ballet of San Francisco Ballet, who is at LEAP earning a major in dance performance and a minor in liberal arts, stated, "I find that when I go to class, this other space opens up in my head, and there's all this energy there that I hadn't tapped into." (2). I read this article, with the belief that LEAP has the ability to change the way in which individuals view dance in the University



setting. The program gives dancers a chance to pursue a professional career in dance, while focusing on academics at the same time. This way, dancers, especially ballet dancers, do not have the excuse not to go to college with the idea that they will be too old to start a career once a college graduate. If the dancer wants both, they have the ability to achieve both.

Mr. Halligan, a much older dancer, gave his thoughts of his LEAP students at St. Mary's, "They've been told since they were eight that the goal is perfection. Of course they'll never reach it. That's good and that's bad." (3). These students are here to learn and to earn a degree. They do not settle for anything less than excellent work, "so if they get an A-, they think they've failed miserably." This success will give the dancers the ability to easily transition into their second career, after their performing days are through. With a college degree, Dalene Bramer, a student and member of San Francisco Ballet says, "I won't feel like I have to keep dancing because there's nothing else for me to do." (4). And Mr. Baird an administrator at St. Mary's said, "They don't know it yet, but you do get tired of dance by the end of it. You get to the point where you say, 'I've got everything I can get out of it. I'm fulfilled.'" (4). Dancers cannot dance forever. Some professionals finish very successful careers with another twenty or so years of work experience still ahead of them. And without programs such as LEAP, these dancers do not always have a place in the work force. A college degree is a must have when a transition is made into the next phase of these dancers lives. [Something needs to be said about these dancers are not the same age range as the dancers I interviewed, but their ideas on the dance world helped to understand what is going on in the lives of young dancers today]

In "Curtain Up", a article by Wendy Perron, Perron beings by asking questions which are

similar to the questions I have asked my interviewees. For example, “Should modern dancers go to college? Do they really learn to dance there, or are they better off taking tons of classes until they land a gig?” (1). Throughout the article she begins to defend the dancers choice to stay in school. Explaining, “those four years (in a University dance program) are a precious period of discovery. College is a place where you learn to dance as part of the world, not in isolation” (1). As many of my interviewees felt this same way, Perron believes that through university dance one learns to train their mind as well as their body, continuing by stating, “You learn to look at something from all sides, to weigh opposing viewpoints and develop independent thinking” (2). The dancer with the larger world view, will most likely have an easier time connecting with their audience. And the college dancer is usually, but not always, the dancer with a better understanding of this world, and how it works.

Valerie Wilder explains in Joysanne Sidimus’ book, *Exchanges: Life After Dance*, “The decision to leave a performing career is never an easy one. Many dancers seem to feel that dancing takes such focus and concentration that the minute they start thinking of their next career they are in danger of dissipating that concentration and not dancing as well as they might. It’s as if the admission that there is something else in life would alone be enough to undermine their performance!” (219). Throughout my interviews I discovered that many individuals were so focused on the now, that they did not want to discuss what would happen if they could no longer dance. As much as we do not want to hear it, all dancing careers must come to an end at one point or another. It is not even about getting injured or ill, it is simply about taking care of ones body, and knowing when it has been enough. These dancers should not feel as if thinking of the

next career move will make them a worse dancer, in fact it can only make them a smarter dancer. As Wilder continued on to state, "Ballet is a short career; so most dancers are going to have to do something else after they dance. There are various ways to prepare for this even if one doesn't want to think about employment options until the end of the career" (220). The easiest and most reliable option would be financial planning for the dancer. Kathleen Bannon described her thoughts on the issue, "I've found that transitions in life are much like dancing: with ninety percent hard work and ten percent luck and talent, you will succeed" (39). I believe that as long as one gives their all to the path in which they choose to follow, they will be able to achieve great things. A dancer will be a dancer for their entire life, although they must realize that dance, itself, is not the end all be all. When asked what he would recommend to young people embarking on a dance career, Paul Taylor replied, "I recommend that they don't do it at all. I go into colleges and tell them to forget all about it, because I think that a little discouragement is the most I can do to help." Shocking as that is, Taylor continued on to explain, "I've always believed that unless somebody really has a very big need to dance and feels absolutely driven and has some kind of a real dream about it, he shouldn't take up people's time." (110). Taylor went on to say he was never discouraged in the beginning of his career, "I didn't listen to anybody, even if somebody had tried to tell me", that being said, Taylor feels that with the discouragement given to young dancers, you are able to weed out the weaker souls, "I don't think there's any room for weak souls, because they'll give it up eventually anyway" (110). Taylor expressed how one can no from the beginning who has the drive to completely pursue dance as a career, and who does not.

Throughout each article and book that I read on this topic every professional dancer expressed the life of a dancer, and the challenges and demands that come along with the lifestyle.

The smarter, as well as stronger dancer will be the one to succeed in this business. Dancers need to know that they can enjoy the time they are dancing now, while still planning for what is to come. Every dancer I read about stressed the importance of an education, as well as the importance of knowing about the world and all it entails. I have discovered it an easy thing to hide behind dance, although when dance is no longer there, it is not as easy to hide.

**VII.) Conclusion: Tying it all together:**

Throughout this process I have discovered what it truly means to be a dancer. I have listened to others speak, while reading about professional dancers and their careers, all to understand myself better. I found that I would interview one dancer, and simply agree with their views of the dance world. I would then continue on to the next interviewee, and this dancer would say something that would change the way I felt in the previous interview. This seemed to continue on throughout the entire process, while I listened and learned the thoughts of each dancer. Late in the process, I made a conscious decision to interview myself. I looked at the list of questions in which I had asked each individual, and forced myself to write down my own answers. This project has allowed me to look into the dance world, and see what I truly want for myself. It has allowed me to think about what I do in the classroom on a daily basis, and understand my reasoning why. Why would I put myself through this? Because not everyone can handle the heart-ache that comes along with the few moments of success. Giving up everything to have those moments on-stage when you feel untouchable is a difficult trade-off. When a dancer starts to feel alive and whole only when dancing, performing can become like an addiction. Dealing with all the pain and frustration, for just a few minutes of glory, dancing one's heart out, is what some dancers live for. For some, it is their one way of truly communicating with the world.

It seems as if one cannot always predict the few individuals who will make it in the dance industry. This is because the dancer who will make it, is not simply the dancer with the most technique. Rather, I have found the industry to be more focused on image, and the way in which an individual can package themselves and portray that package to the world translates into

success. By not taking things personally, not being sensitive, and not being pulled down by the low self-esteem of others, one can survive and even thrive.

I found that dancers are dancers, no matter where they train, plain and simple. I came to see that it does not matter as much what setting the dancer is in, rather, the more important thing is who they are as a human being, and what they envision for their future. Each individual questioned had a different story to tell. Some dancers never want to stop learning about the art of dance, whereas, some cannot wait to be done. Some dance with exact future plans in the making, and some dance not knowing where tomorrow will take them.

I continue to wonder why an individual chooses to go down the path of being a performer? Because, it seems to me that dance is in a world all its own. A world which I came to believe as the world of perfection. A world of beauty, and happily ever afters. This world is filled with thousands of individuals striving to make it, striving to become the next big success, the next big somebody. Yet, as I have grown-up, I have come to find that the world does not unravel as clearly as the fairytale I had imagined. On stage, the dancer appears to be both beautiful and strong. However, off-stage is when the rest of the world seems to unravel for her. This is when the blood, sweat and tears show through. As the curtain falls, the dancer re-enters the real world.

A dancer's world is full of competition. Hungry for a chance to be a dancer on tour with Madonna, Clara in Westside's annual production of The Nutcracker, or a company member in Mark Meismer's show Evolution - no matter what the job may be, competition surrounds each one of us. The life of a dancer is filled with nothing less than hard work day in and day out. These individuals enter the studio ready to push their bodies beyond limitations. They stare at

themselves in the mirror, analyzing their every move, their every imperfection. Each dancer is constantly challenging herself to reach further, climbing to the next level, achieving what was previously thought of as impossible. Tearing their muscles, and bruising their bones, these dancers beat themselves up, trying to achieve greatness.

I have found that no matter how upset I find myself to be, the sheer moments of happiness felt when dancing, continues to be what keeps me pushing through. As I listened and understood the ideas behind the dancer who no longer enjoys dancing in the university setting, I questioned if I come across the same way. I listened to the dancers who had thoughts of not coming to college, and wondered if I had made the wrong choice. I even listened to the dancers who held blueprints of their futures, having to ask myself what is the next step after graduation? I worried that I should not be having to question one thing after the next. Although, I discovered that I was even more moved when listening to the dancers speak of the moment they knew that they had to pursue a professional career, the students who plan to audition for anything and everything, and the dancers who could not even begin to think of the next career move, because this was all they ever wanted. I was truly touched by the lovely stories which were shared by the students. I found that this is something I want for myself, dance is what keeps me grounded. It continues to allow myself to understand who I am as an individual, as well as how to understand the individuals in the surrounding community.

### **Wanting to Please**

The high school principal, fairly new to the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, shows his support of his students by coming to view their annual dance concert. Standing in the back of the theater, he waits to be seated. He soon approaches a woman, who is, both, a mother of two of the girls in the show, as well as, a parent volunteer. Knowing that this is not her first time seeing the show, the principal begins to ask of her feelings on the quality behind it. Mainly, he is worried about any sexual content that there may be. The woman generously gives her honest opinions on the performance. Assuring the principal of a clean, and professional show; the woman explains the dancers artistic creations, positively lacking any form of sexual innuendos. He then finishes the conversation, and finds his way to his seat, just in time for the curtain to open, and the show to begin.

Only one minute into the first number the woman slumps down in her chair. And less than half-way through the first act she nervously looks around, trying to find the reaction on the principal's face. The earlier conversation had made her view the concert in a new light, and she began to watch each aspect of the movement with a more critical eye. She was embarrassed by how wrong she had been. For years now, this woman has sat through one performance after the next. Yet, it was this night, when she first realized how comfortable she had become with the sexuality found in each of the young girls. She had seen it so many times before, it became second nature. The costumes were tiny, and the intention was clear. These girls were on stage to do one thing, impress the boys.

Throughout history men's fascination with female sexuality has been equally matched by the fear of it, resulting in valiant efforts to control women. Locking them up in madhouses,



confining them in corsets and cumbersome skirts, clitoridectomy, cosmetic surgery: these are only some of the attempts, and women have both defined and colluded with them. The current mania among women for surgically altering their bodies, pumping them full of silicone and the virus Botox, is only the most extreme form of this collusion. (P. 13)

Females, by nature, want to please. The media has made women believe that in order to be good in this life, they need to sell themselves. Dancers are usually drawn to the studio at a very young age with the intention of dressing in pretty, little leotards with attached tutu's, wanting to feel pretty about themselves. We have found, that in every culture there is a "constantly changing image of the visually perfect women. Down the years this ideal was the first embodied by dancers...They and the actresses and models who came after them replaced the religious goddesses of antiquity in the popular imagination as revered, larger-than-life figures" (P.39). Little girls in studios around the world, watch the older dancers in awe and yearn to someday have that same recognition and attention.

They, women, are a product in which men will desire depending upon how they package themselves. "As we know, women's bodies have been used to sell everything from cars to financial services. And it isn't only tabloids and sex magazines confined to the top shelf that rely for sales on displaying a woman on the cover" (P. 14). Women are judged by: the color of their hair, the size of their waist, and the softness of their skin, just to name a few. If they do not fit the mold, they feel as if they are not good enough. And this idea of "beauty" rings true to dancers every where. Dancers who stand in front of a mirror day after day, and dancers who constantly analyze every inch of flesh on their delicate bodies. And after to going auditions where she is cut before anyone even sees her move, the dancer begins to see the idea behind the rejection. She is

not packaged correctly, therefore, she simply does not fit the part.

The female body has been an object of sexual obsession throughout history, the focus of dreams and fears. The fashion and beauty business, organized religion, the entertainment world, the media and the medical establishment have all staked their claim to this fertile territory. Women have long been assumed to reveal their true nature through their bodies, and aside from giving birth this is most in evidence when they dance. According to many historians and other commentators, the main purpose of dance is either to stimulate sexual appetite or act as a substitute for sex ... Professional dancers have been seen as the most dangerous of all women, a reflection of the idea that men are powerless to resist temptation when it's put on display. (P. 9-10)

Although, we find the young high school girls prancing around the stage, hoping to impress the boys; we have come to learn that, that is not all there is to dance. The dancer moves for many reasons. She moves to express herself, she moves to tell a story. She is merely pulled towards the movement.

Feet were, in tenth-century China, thought (mainly by affluent men) to be the most "sexually exciting" part of a woman's body. Female dancers had feet that were,

"bandaged up in childhood so that they only grew to three or four inches. It's debatable whether dancers invented this form of self-mutilation themselves, for it maimed a part of the body which had to be strong and flexible for their work. We'll never know whether they were simply obeying the orders of their dancing masters when they agreed to have their feet bound; but we only have to look at the way classical ballerinas torture their feet to realize that masochism in pursuit of beauty is still intrinsic to the dance world" (P.40)

Many believe in the saying, pain is beauty. Women in today's society go through such pain

as, waxing their eyebrows, to as large as liposuction and breast augmentation. Whereas, dancers seem to go through these painful, beauty nips and tucks as well, they also go through extreme physical pain; torturing their bodies in order to achieve the things in which they need to do in order to pursue life goals as a dancer. "Even when the custom [foot-binding] was abolished by the Manchu dynasty in the seventeenth century, women continued practicing it secretly on their daughters. Right up to the 1930s tiny ornate shoes were still being made in China, not for dolls but for little girls" (p. 41).

We find that, the costuming may be small most of the time, but this is not always with a sexual intention. Rather, the costuming is minimal in order to show the line of the body. The body is the framework of a beautiful piece of art. When Ballerinas became more technically advanced, they had to begin wearing less and less, allowing the body to move more freely, while not be so restricted to the clothing. "...women's clothes have often been designed around dance to allow freedom of movement. Trailing skirts made it difficult to dance the tango, as did whalebone corsets which kept the torso rigid" (P.11).

Costuming all depends on the context in which it is used. When no more than a small piece of fabric is worn by a young teenager who is not merely invested in the artistic vision of the choreography, but rather, in flirting with the audience and showing off her body, the costume may be seen as inappropriate. Yet, when the same costume is put on a professional, contemporary modern dancer, who is exploring the ground beneath her feet, the context immediately changes.

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### **The Development of My Personal Choreographic Aesthetic**

Before I came to college I thought the best dancers were the ones who had the highest kicks, or completed the most amount of turns. Yet, over the past four years at LMU, my views on what makes a good dancer have dramatically changed. When I am watching other dancers, no longer do I merely look for the best extension, but I pay attention to the passion behind the movement. I have found myself asking more questions about the dancers motivation. For example, is the dancer telling a story? Is there any intention behind the steps in which they are executing?

I have spent the last few years, discovering my own sense of artistry, in which, I have the capability to display as a dancer. In Denise Lietner's class I have found dancing with emotion to be very apparent. There are two dancers who I watch every class. The first dancer has all the technique down. She has beautiful extensions, clean triple pirouettes, great jumps, etc. While the second dancer, on the other hand, does not have the best technique; I see her fall out of pirouettes every so often, and her extensions are decent, but not breathtaking. However, when the two girls dance in the same group, my eye automatically goes to the second dancer. When I watch her dance it does not matter that her technique is not flawless, because I enjoy watching the emotion that pours out of her. When she dances she is not hiding anything, I am able to see the real her, she is being honest with those who are witnessing the dance. Differently, the first dancer, dances as if she has something to hide. With her I am just seeing steps, but I am not truly watching dance.

In class, I struggle with perfecting each move. I have always seemed to worry about how others might judge what I am doing. Rather than focusing on how the movement feels in my own

body, I seem to put my energy into stressing over the viewer, and their thoughts on how my body moves. I work myself into tears if my balance is off during a class or I fall out of a triple pirouette. But the more and more I dance and watch others dance, I realize that those things are not as important any more. Yes one needs wonderful technique in order to be successful in the dance world, however, it is not the only thing that matters. Instead, it is about the emotion and the feeling put behind the movement phrase. Throughout my years here at LMU, I have had the privilege of performing in every Student and Faculty Concert on Campus. These performance opportunities have allowed me to clearly execute certain emotions. Afterwards, people who had been sitting in the audience have told me I looked extremely vulnerable on stage, and they have been able to witness me telling the different stories of my life. These comments have made me proud of the way I performed in particular shows, because emotion had been a main focus of mine while at LMU. I came to the realization that no amount of frustration and stress is going to help or change an individuals' level of technique right before they walk onto the stage. All a dancer can do is go out and enjoy themselves on stage. I thoroughly appreciate being able to express myself and telling a story which audience members are able to relate to.

After discovering how much emotion is important in dancing, I continue to struggle with expressing my personal aesthetic, yet I know the movements only feel right if the emotion is there with them. I enjoy all the steps in between each trick. During my sophomore year, Karen McDonald came and spoke to the Scott Heinzerling's Styles and Forms, class she too talked about telling the story. Although she explained how the story is not only brought to the dance once put onto the stage. It is with you during the first plie given at the barre, it is there when you *tondu*, the story is even with you when walking across the floor. Ever since I heard Ms.

McDonald speak I began and continued to try and perform every movement of every class.

During her demonstration she had two dancers show a simple phrase. Next she gave them a story to go along with the phrase and had them perform for a second time. The difference was drastic, and I was amazed by how much emotion soon poured out of each dancer. Next Ms. McDonald had each girl simply walk across the floor. The next time across they were told to walk towards something or someone on the other side. And again, the second time through was drastically different than the first. I would like to experience working with Karen McDonald because she has the ability to make each dancer aware of why they are dancing, and the wonderful gift of being able to put oneself out in front of others.

I have learned that when I dance from my heart, and I am completely honest with those who are viewing I tend to use a lot of free flowing movements. I am soft and graceful, and dance in sustained time. I tend to use a great deal of indirect focus when dancing, taking in everything the space has to offer. However, when taking in all the space around me my motions still tend to be small. My movements are usually very light rather than heavy and deep into the ground. My favorite way to move is using several lyrical motions. I have also become aware that I show emotion internally. I usually do not savor the movements which I perform slashing, wringing, and pressing motions.

I am not extremely comfortable with weight sharing and partner work. I spent three semesters in Holly Johnston's modern four, feeling completely out of my element. When the class would practice improvisation, I felt awkward giving my weight over to another dancer and trusting them with my body. It did not feel right laying on another dancer and moving with them as one. Although, I enjoy watching this type of movement, I simply do not feel I have let loose

enough in order to allow myself to move in this way.

I have spent the last two summers dancing at the Broadway Dance center, in New York City, explicitly under the direction of Tracie Stanfield and Ginger Cox. While, during the school year I working under the guidance of Paige Porter (LMU part-time faculty), and Mandy Moore (Bobbie's School of Performing Arts). These four women have truly change the way I think about dance, and the way in which I approach the classroom. These women are mainly centered around the lyrical and commercial/contemporary jazz field, however, each individual has a unique way of executing the movement and teaching their students. I am the most alive when dancing in these classes. Tracie is the most sustained mover of the four, while the other three seem to have a little more edge to them. Through these classes I have learned that I do not always need to match them exactly, rather, I have been given the chance to be the choreographer myself, and manipulate the movement a little until it feels the best within me.



I sat down with my fellow classmate, Jen Bailey, to discuss her own personal aesthetic. Jen first expressed ballet as the thing that made her the most happy. She prefers to perform classical modern out of the different types of modern she has been introduced to. And, she spoke of contemporary modern dance as something she can appreciate for the hard work that is put behind it, but it is not her favorite style of dance. In general she loves dancing herself more than watching from an audience member perspective. She feels as if she transcends in both time and space, almost having an out of body experience. When dancing her best, Jen explained she feels as if she weighs nothing, yet her body is so full to give. Stating, “the more I give, the fuller I am, that’s why I do it. It’s amazing!” Continuing on to say, she calls this “the dance high”, explaining “it is such a weird feeling, on a good day I dance like this, and my body is actually feels as if it has been shaken up. However, in a spiritual sense, this is when she is able to feel closet to God. Jen told me that she sometimes giggles in class, and can even find herself to laugh uncontrollably. This laughing mostly occurs in Ballet, and Denise Leitner’s class. The classes in which she feels the most comfortable and natural moving in her body. Although, she has seen a glimpse of this in Paige Porter’s Jazz V class. The laughter usually occurs when she is tired and not thinking, when she allows her body to simply move through the space.

Jen is a very strong, technical dancer. She grew up classically trained, and has a huge passion for dance. She feels her personal aesthetic comes across when she is happily moving through the space. Jen chooses to move executing what she calls, “pretty lines”. She enjoys the lines of the body, and the classical shapes formed within her own body. Her movement is classical ballet, that seems to be a bit softer around the edges.



Battleworks is a company of eight dancers that offers a wide variety of performance and residency activities. Company members teach in many styles including modern techniques, ballet, jazz, composition, repertory, improvisation, yoga, and pilates. Although the company's teaching is focused toward the dance professional, company members are skilled and experienced at teaching all levels and ages from children to senior adult.

**Battleworks Dance Company**

PO Box 16

New York, NY 10012

(347)329-5526 phone

[info@battleworksdance.com](mailto:info@battleworksdance.com)



## R.A.W. (Reality at Work)



Mia Michaels R.A.W., has toured in Korea, in Amsterdam at the International Dance Festival, had their NYC concert in '99 and toured Europe in 2001. The dancers are beautifully attuned to the demands that Michaels places on them. Stamina is taken for granted, but beyond that, "being there"-in the sense of exuding a vivid presence even when not moving-is required.

Contact:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Email:

[REDACTED]



## The Savage Jazz Dance Company

SAVAGE JAZZ DANCE COMPANY is dedicated to exploring through dance the beauty and complexity of jazz music -the authentic American form. “.it may be the most layered, sophisticated concert jazz dance company in these Western climes,” said K.C Patrick of Dance Magazine.

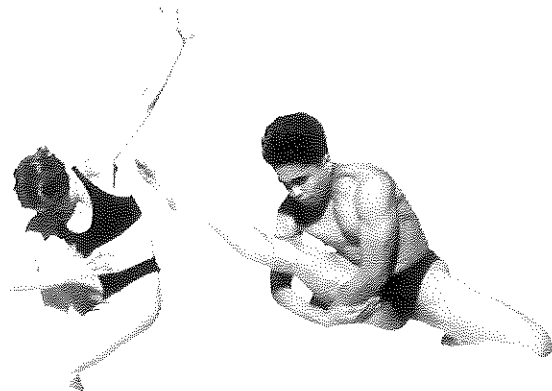


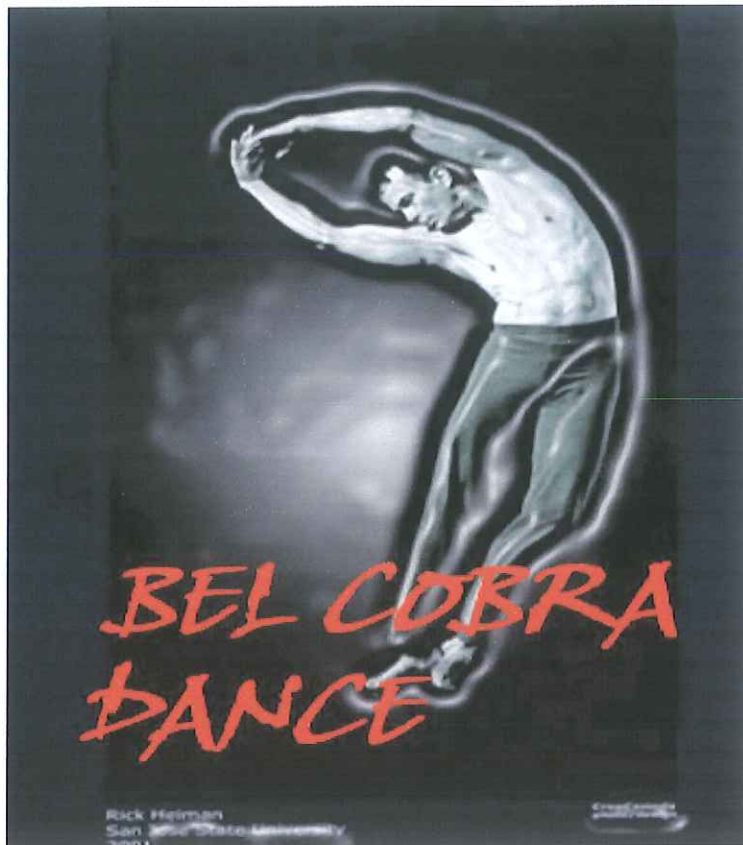
Founded in 1992 by Artistic Director, Reginald Ray-Savage, Savage Jazz Dance Company is a convergence of artistic forces, where the energy, improvisation, and syncopation of jazz is expressed through athletic, lyrical, and explosive dance. Savage Jazz's repertory includes works to the music of such jazz legends as Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Dave Brubeck, and Charles Mingus, as well as some of the country's best contemporary jazz composers, including long time collaborator and award-winning jazz bassist, Marcus Shelby. Savage Jazz Dance

Company combines the fundamental movement vocabulary of contemporary dance, jazz dance, Dunham technique, and ballet to draw out the complexity of jazz

**Contact:**

530 East Eighth St. #202  
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# EVOLUTION

*Contemporary Dance with a Commercial Edge*



Evolution is a company of 15 dancers that includes the winner of Fox's hot new reality series "So You Think You Can Dance," Nick Lazzarini, and runner up Melody Lacayanga. The company has worked with some of Los Angeles and New York's hottest choreographers, Liz Imperio, Dee Caspary, Justin Giles and Jason Parsons, amongst many others.

## Visual Rhythm

**a young theatrical jazz dance company that uses dance and music ...**

...to bring drama to life. Visual Rhythm maintains its fresh and innovative approach to contemporary jazz dance by staying close to the street and presenting works that are relevant for audiences who also enjoy hip-hop, MTV, poetry slams and other art forms that speak to a youthful, urban, global culture.

### **Visual Rhythm Dance Company**

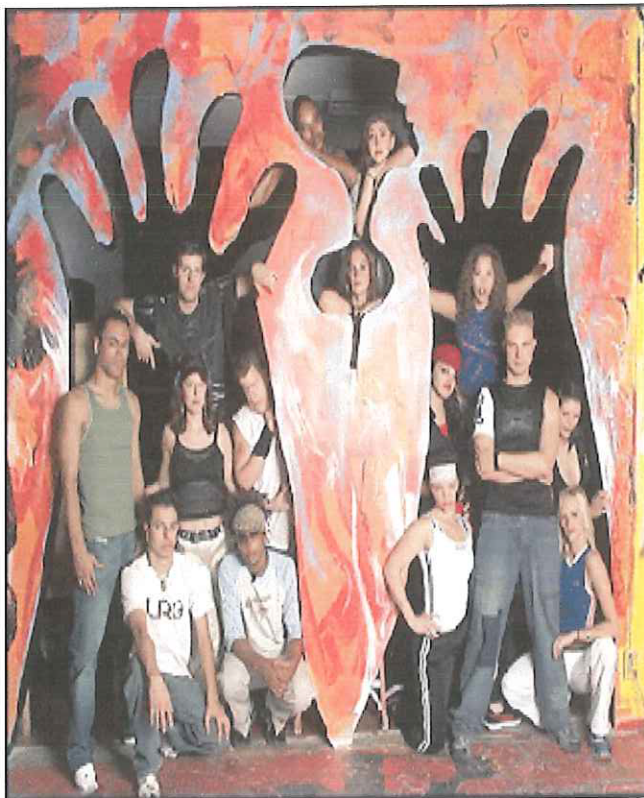
19 N. Second Street  
Suite 102  
San Jose, CA 95113



## Nebellen

An exciting experiment in dance fusion, Nebellen, a non-profit dance company, was formed in Phoenix where it can't get much hotter! Blurring the lines between high art and pop culture Nebellen brings a unique blend of raw movement and passion to their shows. Fierce, athletic, energetic, and provocative only begins to describe this ethnically diverse group of performers.

Nebellen dancers arouse the audience by wedding cutting edge dance styles like house, hip-hop, martial arts, liquid, break dancing (b-boying) and poppin' with the control of more established dance forms. Nebellen is truly an American grown art form blending not only various dance styles, but spoken word, and live DJing. Nebellen's "Mixer Show" is a fully developed stage show with music varying in genre from classical to hip hop, dazzling glow in the dark spectacles, and a little bit of everything for all ages to enjoy.



### Contact:

Ellen Rath



[nebellen@hotmail.com](mailto:nebellen@hotmail.com)



## JUMP RHYTHM JAZZ PROJECT

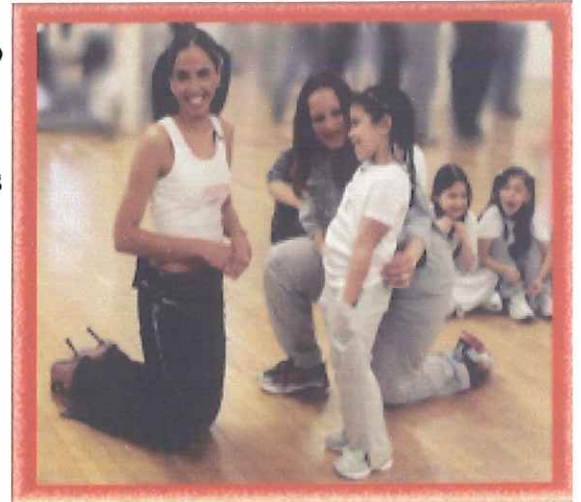
JRJP was founded in 1990 in New York City by Billy Siegenfeld. In its first years, the company focused on the following projects: touring *Romance in Swingtime*, the chamber jazz musical featuring Billy Siegenfeld and his longtime associate Jeannie Hill; presenting the duo in jazz-tap teaching workshops; and sponsoring Siegenfeld in choreographic residencies with both professional and university companies. While touring *Romance*, dancers, educators and critics became aware of Siegenfeld and Hill's fresh take on the tradition of American rhythm dancing (*Dance Magazine* cited them as "a delightful latter-day Fred and Ginger"), and credited Siegenfeld with generating a style of dance built upon the rhythmic and dynamic foundations of swinging jazz music. This style is formalized and taught in Chicago and on tour as the Jump Rhythm Jazz Technique. In the fall of 1997, following years of choreographing on commission or on pick-up companies, Siegenfeld decided to organize JRJP into an ensemble of eight dancers to train in the technique and rehearse repertory and new works on a regular basis.



## *Keep Rising To The Top*

***Champions are not those who never fail, they are those who never quit."***

Keep Rising To The Top's (KR3TS) mission is to broaden the notion of what a dancer is and promotes the preservation of ethnic and cultural dances. Based in Spanish Harlem, KR3TS fulfills a need in the community to provide a positive alternative to social and street pressures by providing dance classes and support programs in a non-discriminating atmosphere. KR3TS also carries out its mission through its core-performance group that fosters pre-professional dancers.



KR3TS Dance Company caters to children, young adults of lower to middle income families in Latino communities of New York City primarily. The company also opens its doors to any other community. Their goal is to provide an outlet to develop skills and abilities that will enhance their lifestyles.

## SEROS DANCE

*Artistic Director*

**Joshua Carlson**

Encountering passion and mortality, the forbidden and fearful become beloved and sublime and carnal athleticism can overtake balletic grace. The icons of our waking life invade our dreams. We break from sleep laughing or sweating or mumbling a desire for a connection, for understanding, for something beyond beds, bars, bank statements and boredom. Melding circus strength, super-human power and classical dance, SEROS creates intense, joyous works that eclipse the simple boundaries of sensuality. Dancers offend gravity, wrestle the texture of space, and fool time applying obsessive technique, harmonic partnering and rippling physicality. Bodies do things you did not think were possible, or natural, or moral.

For audition information, please contact the company manager at [info@SEROSdance.org](mailto:info@SEROSdance.org).



**Contact:**

**685 Academy Street, No. 28**

**New York, New York 10034**

**917-723-0454**

**[Info@SEROSdance.org](mailto:Info@SEROSdance.org)**

## **Summary of Dance Studies**

### **Fundamentals of Dance Comp I**

Explored ways to generate energy and connections between individuals.

Learned to take artistic inspiration from outside sources such as visual art and literature.

Worked with another dancer in a creative process to create choreography for a duet.

Collaborated in groups to find solutions to movement based problems; discovered how to include many dancers in finding the function of a metaphorical object.

Learned the difference between far and near kinesphere and how movement within each communicates various ideas.

Understood the meaning of positive and negative space and how to incorporate the idea into the body.

Built a more comprehensive dance vocabulary while developing the ability to verbally and academically communicate about dance and dancers.

Formed a critical eye for observing and composing movement.

Learned how to receive and apply constructive criticism from teachers and peers.

Moved in an improvised atmosphere.

### **Fund of Dance Comp II**

Performed Deborah Haye's "Exit" and discussed what could be learned from that experience; discovered how it affects people as performers, dancers and humans.

Worked in groups to further our understanding of choreography and ensemble work.

Experienced professional dance through video media, and received several opportunities to reflect and expound our thoughts in written form.

Used objects and props to aid in the choreographic process.

Developed a portfolio which included pictures, articles, journals and other symbols reflecting our ideas and thoughts on dance.

### **Laban Movement Analysis**

Learned about the connection between movement and the mental and physical development of an infant through childhood.

Read about the history of Rudolf Laban and his contemporary Bartinieff and how they developed Laban Movement Analysis and Laban Notation methodology.

Explored the complex world of mind-body centering and learned how our mental experiences can translate to a physical realm.

Learned about total body organization including breath, upper lower, head tail, body half and cross lateral movement.

Discovered the greater idea of effort by studying the varying aspects of time, weight, flow and space (indirect/direct)

Learned the shapes: wall, pin, triangle, ball, spiral and the modes of shape change.

Discussed in depth the facets of space including but not limited to pathways, kinesphere, positive and negative, arching, carving and spoking.

Learned how the body can utilize and manipulate space to its advantage.

The Class culminated in an in-depth analysis of movement in different forms of media such as television, movies, sports and other elements of popular culture.† This included how different movement qualities and physical signatures revealed different themes and characteristics (often socially constructed ideas).

### **Dance Styles and Forms**

Learned how to bring choreography out of the studio and place it in certain environments that either limited or further enabled the physicality of the movement and creative process.

Explored the effects of choreographic devices, including augmentation, diminution, transposition and retrograde, amongst others.

Revisited Laban ideas and concepts and how they play a part in the aesthetic of certain dance styles.

Worked with partners to develop movement studies set to music. This helped to enlighten us to the complexity of the music/dance relationship.

Worked with all that was included in the semester to build a solo study as a comprehensive final.

Experienced lectures demonstrations from multiple artists and choreographers in the greater Los

Angeles community.

### **Drumming for Dance**

Currently learning drumming techniques and rhythms; finding out how many different rhythms work together.

While exploring rhythm we are also exercising our minds by retaining rhythmic information.

Learning to incorporate our knowledge of rhythm into our technique classes; improving the musicality of our movement.

Learning traditional chants and drumming from different parts of the world.

### **To Dance is Human**

Explored our own culture through pondering what it is that has helped to form our personality and disposition.

This was achieved by thinking about stories and traditions from our family and personal life.

Created a basket containing artifacts and symbols representative of our personal life and passions; a reflection of self.

Participated in story telling that helped to enlighten the class about our personal point of view.

Completed a field visit along with analysis about what was communicated culturally, sexually (pertaining to gender) and socially through the movement.

Learned how to read and respond to dance and articles about how dance reflects culture.

Developed a personal view of what dance means and how it has affected our lives.

Explored how dance from all around the country is affected by world cultures and in turn how cultural values are exposed through dance and movement.

Came to understand how important story telling is in dance and vice versa.

### **Dance History**

Studied the foundations and evolution of Ballet from its origin in the 15th century French Courts through romantic and classical ballet to its more contemporary disciplines.

Learned how modern technique originated and developed as a revolution against ballet and what

it represented physically and socially; also understood how different modern technique grew out of each other and how some drew from ballet as their foundation.

Attended a live performance and wrote a short critique on what we observed.

Had the opportunity to watch and discuss multiple videos on dance and dancing  
Read various articles on dance and how it has evolved and grown through its history including an article discussing the ethnic background of ballet which is usually perceived as an elitist dance form unassociated with any particular culture or ethnicity.

Looked at dance as an ethnic and cultural experience.

Developed our critical eye for movement by writing a final paper that illustrated how dance and movement can be used (either symbolically or literally) in film to reveal theme and meaning.

### **Kinesiology I**

Researched and learned about the body on a cellular level.

Studied the many systems of the body including muscular, respiratory, circulatory, skeletal and nervous systems; also learned how all these systems affect each other and function together to make the body a well-oiled and sophisticated machine.

Gained an understanding of how the body can and should work more efficiently with respect to dance, health and longevity.

Wolf's Law: Form follows function

### **Kinesiology II**

Took the major theoretical concepts that we learned in Kinesiology I and took them into the studio applying them in a physical setting.

Focused on individual joints and strongholds of the body and studied the ideal function to see how they can affect posture, alignment and other areas of the body whether proximal or otherwise.

Learned about bone rhythms and the opposing forces that exist in the body to create balance and expansion.

### **Principles of Teaching**

Learned about the seven multiple intelligences and how to incorporate it into the curriculum for students.

Explored and developed teaching styles and techniques through in-class workshops.

Learned how to format a lesson plan and include cognitive, psychomotor, and effective methods of learning.

Discussed ways in which to introduce dance and movement concepts into the academic classroom.

Experienced and discussed the various ways in which music can enhance and limit music.

Learned the educational requirements for grades K-12 and how to adhere to the California standards in the lesson plan.

### **Ballet**

Worked to utilize the core to create length, stability, and flexibility.

Used the floor as a spring board to roll/ work through the metatarsals.

Applied the concept of opposition: For example, lifting up in a plie and pushing down in a releve.

Worked to achieve rotation by activating the inner thighs and spiraling to the greater trochanter, rather than rotating from the knees or the ankles.

Learned to expand the sternum and sliding the scapula into the back so your arms have a support system.

Recognized proper placement through core activation, by envisioning your belly button to your spine.

Used the concept of imagery to further develop our technique.

Developed our ability for difficult enchainements to further improve our technique.

Expanded our technical ballet vocabulary.

Worked on musicality for various phrase work and movement (including proper accent and energy).

### **Pointe & Variations**

Acquired muscle control and ankle strength when dancing sur la pointe.



Worked on increasing confidence and dancing with out fear when faced with personal challenges and goals.

Developed the ability to dance on pointe with ease and grace, while maintaining proper alignment.

Learned both contemporary and classical variations.

Recognized the difference between healthy rigor and over excursion.

### **Modern Dance**

Used knowledge of dance fundamentals into a more confident investigation of different vocabularies and approaches to Modern Dance.

Discovered how to create a strong versatile range of motion.

Experimented with improvisation as a soloist and as an ensemble.

Explored off center pathways, joint articulation, and athleticism.

Developed the ability to trust ourselves with movement vocabulary.

Learned how to create accents and dynamics with in our bodies.

Worked on how to respond organically rather than manufacture movement.

Used our artistic curiosity to experience risk and growth.

Discovered how to learn, transpose, and retrograde movement phrases easily and clearly.

Explored contact improv and trusting oneself when working with a partner.

Familiarized ourselves when inverting the body.

### **Yoga**

Demonstrated physical efficiency in postures: developed the ability to maintain steady flow of breath.

Executed inverted postures for upper body strength.

Executed seated and bending postures to promote flexibility and strength.

Identified which muscle groups were active during asanas.

Developed a sensitivity to our body's balance and well being.

Learned to become an autonomous practitioner and integrate asanas in our own stretching, conditioning and rehabilitation.

### **Tap**

Explored different rhythms in swing, blues, new age and funk.

Learned about tap legends and how they contributed to the world of tap.

Demonstrated movement vocabulary while experimenting with the idea of improv.

Learned how to count quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes in 4/4 time.

Acquired a basic understanding of tap rudiments and how to organize them into a phrase.

Explored the concept of listening.

Discovered a basic understanding of how tap relates to music.

### **Jazz**

Expanded our knowledge of various jazz styles in the commercial field.

Built stamina, strength, flexibility, and confidence in performing jazz technique.

Learned the responsibilities of being a professional dancer, which involves the audition process and techniques, attitude, and rehearsal etiquette.

Explored different performance qualities with in each style.

Developed an understanding of musicality in jazz movement.

Progressed in technical execution of advanced movement.

Explored the idea of when to be a soloist and when to be an ensemble dancer.

Heightened our knowledge of movement by having a willingness to take risks and expand beyond our kinesphere.

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## Appendix

### Interviews:LMU Dancers -

1.) Took second semester sophomore year off.

Path: Um, well, I started dancing when I was six, I think, in a studio. And, in high school, in high school I just danced in studios. I was on a team, but the year I was on the team we actually didn't get to a competition, it just didn't work out, I don't know what happened. Um, but I used to dance every day, seven days a week, for I think like thirty something hours, it was like, that was all that I did. And then I also taught dance. I taught ballet, tap, and jazz. To, mostly to younger kids, but also to some, like my students were up to age 15. But most of them were like pre-ballets, or ballet ones, or whatever.

Were most of the advanced students dancing seven days a week? Umhummm, most of them, yeah. We got selected for like extra, special dance classes, so that's why we were. So, there was like a core group of people that would be selected by the teachers to take extra classes. So it was like sort of the group that I was in.

Was it a big studio? Yeah, it was pretty big. I don't know, it's not like it was well known or anything, but there were a lot of really good teachers. State? Massachusetts.

Defining moment: Um, no. There was never a moment. I don't know. I never really thought I would be a professional dancer. But it was always such a huge part of my life. Like when I was in high school, I dropped out of high school, I think sophomore year. So, and all that I did was dance. I got credit for teaching, and I worked at another dance studio in the office, and I danced, so, it was basically the only thing that I ever did.

Did you finish high school through a GED program? I finished through a correspondence school in Michigan. So basically, they let me get high school credit for working, and teaching, and dancing. So, haha, it was, but I got a real diploma.

How did you figure out that you were going to do that? Well, when I was younger I was home schooled a lot. So, my parents knew a lot about alternative schools. And then, I was going, I went to a private school for high school, and then I went to a public school for high school, and then I dropped out completely. But my parents wanted me to get a diploma, so I don't know, they found it for me.

Decision to come to LMU: Um, well, um, I wanted to be in Los Angeles pretty much. I actually, I didn't visit the school at all before I got here. I just applied, sent in a video, and it was the only school that I got into in Los Angeles. I think I also applied to Cal Arts, but I'm not sure. I think I got on the waiting list, but I don't remember. I didn't really research it or anything. Haha, yeah.

Think about not going to college: Oh yeah. I don't like school very much.

Was it your parents who wanted you to come? Yeah, they did. But once I started I kind of had an obsession with graduating.

If you didn't go to college would you have stayed in your town? No. I still would have come to

Los Angeles.

And just tried to make it in the industry out here? Yeah.

Is the university setting the right place to study hip-hop/commercial dance: The right place? Um, I don't know. I guess it is, I mean I think it depends more on the actual class. I don't really understand what you mean by the right place.

Why come to college if you don't want modern or ballet? No, I think it is fine to study it at the university. Especially if you don't have the chance or the money after tuition to go to a studio. I guess, I mean, well if you weren't going to do ballet or modern, and you didn't want to get a college degree, then I don't see the point to going. I'm sorry.

Career goals: with dance? Um, right now I don't really have any career goals with dance. I'm going to be teaching when I go back home. I don't really want to pursue a professional career. Um, but I know I'm getting a raise because I have a degree. Haha. So you'll be back in Massachusetts teaching? Yeah.

Benefits of coming to college: Mostly just being able to communicate about what I'm trying to teach, or what I'm trying to do, or, the teaching style that I'm using. I guess exposure to different people, different teachers.

Biggest Influence: Pause.

Or I guess in everything, not just being here: I haven't really had anybody whose been my biggest influence actually. But my teachers at my old school really, um, in high school I think one of my biggest influences was my jazz teacher, and my ballet.

Favorite class/least favorite class: I think my favorite was modern.

With which teacher? Um, I really like Maria's class right now actually. And I liked Damon's class a lot too, it was fun.

(Looks around) And, my least favorite, I guess ballet with Scott. Haha.

How many semester did you take from him? Um, three, maybe. I don't remember. Three or four. You just never like it? Haha, yeah.

Strengths/weakness: I feel like I'm filling out one of those evaluations. My strengths and weaknesses. Um, I think my weaknesses are that I compare myself to everybody else, and I get scared. Like I'm scared of failing, so I don't want to try. Um, I don't know what my strengths are. I don't know. Um, (long pause). I don't know what my strengths are. If you think of something later on and want to tell me...Ok, I'll try.

What if dance was taken out of your life for some reason: Um, I'd try acting, and, I'd probably study psychology or social, I want to get my masters in social work. So working with people. Are you planning on getting your masters right after? No. Not really.

Peers motivate: I think the people here would if it wasn't for being an academic setting. Like if it was the same teachers, and the same class work and everything like that, without the grades and

the pressure, then I think it would. But it's too overwhelming. Um, I don't know, I guess I don't like dancing for a grade at all. It sort of destroys the whole point of it for me.

Have you come to not really enjoy it? Yeah. Um hum, yeah, it's more like a chore. It's something I have to get through, to get a degree, so I can go home.

Do you think people take away or distract you? Um, well, I think that, um, see the thing is, the only thing is, I guess there are people in the classes, my classes who do make me not as focused but more because I am intimidated, and that has to do with getting a grade for the class. Like it's not, if I were at a regular studio and those people were there it wouldn't bother me at all.

When you were at your studio back home were you ever intimidate? No, nope, never. Hahaha.

Most important things learned: Pause.

It doesn't have to be just in the dance department, but in coming to college in general: The most important thing that I've learned, um, research something before you get stuck doing it. Like, don't stick with something if you don't enjoy it. That's probably the most important thing I've learned. That doesn't really have anything to do with school, haha, I don't know.

Do you wish you researched this program more? Yeah, um, I don't think it would have made a difference, I think I would have still come out here, I mean come to this school, but, um, (pause), but I should have researched it more. Haha. I'm sorry, I feel like I'm not being helpful.

Extra: For dance? No. For other things? Uh, no, cause I was here. I did summer school a couple of the summers to catch up. And, uh well I went to bartending school, but that doesn't really count, haha, um, no I haven't done anything extra. I haven't done any extra, I haven't been motivated since I've been out here, especially dance classes, because I don't enjoy it any more at all.

Do you stay out here for summers or go back home? I usually stay out here for part of it, and then I go home for part of it too.

What was your reasoning for taking a semester off? Um, I took a semester off because, uh my parents got divorced, and I have three little sisters who were living at home, and they were having a hard time, so, I went home to be with them. And, um, I came back because it just felt like the right thing to do. I wanted to finish and I didn't want to apply to transfer to any other colleges, because I knew that I could just come back here. Um, and my boyfriend lived out here, and I wanted to come back to be with him. And, uh, like I said before, I felt obsessed with finishing school. And I think that is probably mostly what it was. I was like, I started it I have to finish. Haha. But that's so like this whole personal...

Are you the type of person to never quit something? Um, well, I don't know, I guess I quit a lot of things. Like I dropped out of high school, and stuff like that...but, yeah, once I get set on something I do it.

Are you disappointed with the program? Um, I'm not really disapp...I think it's a great program. I think that there's a great variety of teachers, and the classes are fun, and there, and there, I mean you learn a lot. Especially, with the academic classes, well some of the more academic, haha, like kinesiology and those types of thing. It's just, the dance major was not the right major for me.

If you went back to coming in Freshman year, would you have made a different decision? Yeah. I would have done a psychology major.

Not danced at all? I probably would have tried it, but I don't know if (looks around) I would have danced here.

Just outside somewhere? Yeah.

Is that just the whole grade reasoning? Umhum.

Before I came here I loved dancing. It was the only thing I ever wanted to do. I danced like forty, forty-five hours a week. Um, and when I wasn't in the studio I was dancing in my house. Like it was the only thing that I did. I danced and I worked, and um, it was like, I don't know, it was my absolute favorite thing in the world.

Did you perform a lot? Yeah. Umhum, for a lot of years I performed with a professional company that did the Nutcracker every year, and I auditioned, and I performed with them probably five or seven shows on the weekend, and they did, the studio did a winter performance and a summer performance where I usually had twelve or fourteen dances in each performance. And we performed six or seven times over the weekend. And I was part of a touring group that did, well, we did shows at public libraries, and community centers, and we performed at old, old peoples homes. Haha. And um, what else, I don't know, I was performing all the time. I was part of a professional modern company.

How did you get involved in that? Um, the modern teacher at my studio just decided that she wanted to start a company, so we had auditions and... that was it, but literally it was the only thing that I did.

Do your sisters dance? They all have. My little sister still does. She dances every day.

How old is she? She's turning 16. She's going to driver's ed this summer. I don't know what to do. Um, I was just talking to her, and she was like I'm going to driver's ed, I'm going to get my license. But anyway, yeah, she dances all the time.

If she wanted to major in dance in college what would you think of the idea? Um, I think it would be really stressful for her. Well, but, um, if that's what she wanted to do, then she would do it. So, and she'd do well.

Second interview: I think that the LMU curriculum is great and if it were in a regular studio without grades it would still be great. I personally would feel much more comfortable being part of the program if it were in a studio just because the pressure of dancing for a grade would be lifted and it would be more fun. As to whether or not I would want to pursue a career in dance I don't know. I probably would. I think that because it would have been a much more comfortable environment for me I would have felt more motivated, worked harder, improved my dancing more and most likely taken more risks when it came to auditions and performances. All of which would have prepared me much better for a professional career. There were a lot of reasons why I decided to attend LMU one the biggest ones was the fact that my parents really really wanted me to get a degree in something. But mainly, I guess that its in my character to be restless, and I just felt that it was time to try something new. I didn't really think about what I was leaving behind when I left, but about what adventures I would have in Los Angeles. Plus I knew that if I went

home, I could get the teaching position back in a second, especially if I came home with a degree. The reasons that I stuck with the dance major instead of switching out are that one, I hoped that if I just gave myself time I would start to love dancing again and two, by the time I began thinking about changing majors I would have had to spend extra time in school to complete the course work.

## 2.) 17 years of dance training.

Defining moment: "Yeah. Well, um, I guess that basically happened during high school. Cause I grew up in the convention world, and studio world, so once I was like, in "the Senior Ball room", um, and started wining scholarships and awards consistently, and I started gaining confidence, that, hey I'm good at this, um, and then I guess my sophomore year of high school I won the dance with the force thing. Which they choose ten kids from across the country and we got to spend the summer out here, and do the edge show and stuff. And that's when I think I really decided it's realistic to pursue this as a career, and when I started to realize that this is what I want to do above everything else.

Path: Definitely being in that world led me out to LA. Every summer, well starting in eighth grade, I came out here every summer because I had scholarships to the edge and millennium. So with that right there, I was always more comfortable with LA, and I knew more people out here from being on the convention circuit. So, um, it was just a much easier transition for me to come out here, then anywhere else. So, when I was a junior in high school and had to start thinking about college, and what I wanted to do after high school, LA just seemed like an obvious choice. Because I had been coming out here, and there are so many great universities in LA, I always just thought I could go to school and have a dance career simultaneously. Or at least, while I was going to school out here be pursuing my dancing. And that's pretty much what I've done.

LMU decision: I applied to, and was accepted to, UCLA, USC, and LMU. So, um, it was a really hard decision. And um, like when I first visited schools, I feel in love with UCLA because the campus is so gorgeous. And all my family went to the University of Texas, so I was really used to, and attracted to the idea of a big school. Um, but then, a big deciding factor was I got a scholarship here, um, and kind of like I think subconsciously I always wanted to do what was going to be the cheapest for my parents, because my parents do pay for my school. And so I wanted to be able to do that, I wanted to make that decision for them. At the same time, just uh, the intimacy here, uh, while I liked the idea of a big school, the fact that I met Judy Scalini the first time that I came to visit, um, she knew, uh, she had experience with several kids with my similar interests, and my background and everything. To have that level of understanding on a first meeting, made this school particularly appealing. But yeah, I would say once I knew I got the scholarship here, I was pretty set on coming here.



Not going to college: Yeah. Especially the summer on dance with a force. I was the youngest out of the group, I was like 15. There was one girl who was 22, but probably half of them were just out of high school, and they were moving out here to start working. I was like, well hey, I can do that if they're all doing this. Just when I was that young, and to be getting the attention I was getting, I thought I might not need to go to school. Maybe it would be better if I came and did this right away, and don't lose the pace that I'm on by taking time out to go to school. But ultimately, I am an academic person, and I do love school, and I just couldn't give that up. And I'm really glad I didn't.

University setting/study hip hop: I think it could be. Um, like, I think this program is comparably, well, compared to other dance programs, extremely versatile, and open to various styles of dance, aside from modern and ballet, which seems to be the stereotype for institutional dance. Um, I don't think this program is quite there yet, as far as offering what my training outside of school has offered. Um, because in the three years that I've been here I've always, consistently taken class outside of school. Just because, you know, even if they did, LMU did, have the best hip-hop teacher here, that's one teacher. Um, over and over. And that's great, cause then you can perfect their style. But you want to be able to do everyone's style. There's a million different styles of hip-hop, a million different styles of jazz. So, to be able to take from as many different teachers as possible, and to be in the competitive environment, I think is a huge deal. I don't know if that could be adopted into the university system. Just because, when you're out in the industry, auditioning, or even just taking class, and you are surrounded by all working dancers, and while it can be a supportive environment, there is definitely just a feeling of competition, that is not as much here. Just because we have this great community and family dynamic here, there, it is, it is the survival of the best. You know, in class people are watching you. And when you go to class, it's not just to feel good in your body or whatever, it's like, to catch people's eye. And I think that is what makes training outside of school particularly necessary. Just becoming comfortable in that competitive environment, and comfortable with the idea of performing...figuring out how to make yourself stand out.

Benefits in the dance world having come to college: Um, ok. I think that a lot of young kids who come out here, and try to get into the industry right out of high school get overwhelmed by it. And I think, I think having this whole other world out here, um, has really kept me grounded. And I haven't got washed up in all of the politics of the dance world, or the entertainment industry, or whatever. I think I have had the time to realize more of who I am, and why I love to dance, and why I want to do this. And it's not just to prove to people at home that I can make it in Hollywood, or you know. I just think having had this academic experience, and uh, I just think there are so many perspectives that you gain being in school, um, that I just feel I have a much better, like, sort of, world view than if I hadn't had come to school. Um, because if I hadn't have come to school it's like a one track mind set, where it's, I make it in this industry or I don't, and then I get so overwhelmed that I give up and I move back home, and now, it's even if my career never did quite reach the heights that I hoped it to, I have so many other things that I love about being in LA that I know about myself that I could pursue out here, um, so I just think, the whole academic thing in general has been so beneficial for me. I think I have matured a lot. Haha. Um,

it's made a big difference. It's just, I mean, that's not even talking about the dance program here, which is a whole other issue. Just LMU in general, just going to school.

Career goals: Oh God, um, my career goal is to make a living performing. For a long time. I want to do everything. And I mean, obviously, I know I'm not going to be a ballerina or something, um, but yeah, I want to do like music tours, concert dance, I want to do musical theater, um, yeah anything and everything. Because it's so unpredictable, and if someone likes the way that I dance, or likes something about me, and offers me an opportunity to make some money and support myself doing something I love, then heck, I'll take it.

Biggest Influence: That's a hard one. Um, ok, well, like my dance teacher from home, Kitty Carter, was such a great influence, just because although I was always from that studio environment, we weren't ever really as technically strong as other studios. She, well, I think the worst thing for her would be to be a "cookie cutter" studio, where everyone dances in sync and the same, um, some of the pieces she put together were so out there and a little weird, and she honestly did not care if we would go to a competition and you know get like bronze medals, which they like don't give to anybody, cause it's like so bad, She didn't care, even though she wasn't from a concert dance environment or anything, what was so great about her, was she was so passionate about making statements, in like a competition dance with kids. She was always so true to the art form, and wanted us all to be different. And so that was, well, she has definitely played a big part. Also, Nick Flores, who I have been assisting for the past two years, and is probably the top working dancer in the commercial industry. He went to my dance studio, but is like ten years older than me. And I didn't know him really until I got out here. But he comes, you know he was trained by my same teacher, and sort of values that same idea of being an individual, and being true to dance. And he has sort of been a mentor to me since I've been out here. And he is a great example for me for one thing, because his career, is like something, is a dream, like, it's unbelievable credits, and what he has gotten to do. But, he was out here for like five years before he started working, and he didn't give it up, and like, I'm sure that in that time he was out here hundreds of kids moved out here and moved back home and stuff. But, he just stuck with it, it takes a certain level of confidence, and a certain passion to stick with it that long. And he always says, he started working when he started, and he says "this is so cliché" when I started being myself. And he says that when he was first out here he always tried to be the look that he thought they wanted, and he would try to straighten his kinky Mexican hair, and you know, pretend to be something that he wasn't, and so he has really instilled that idea in me, that is something I tried to hang on to, and will try to hang onto, is that, to maintain my true individuality, which is just sort of the same thing that Kitty taught me.

Favorite Class/Least favorite: Hahaha. Well, gosh, probably my favorite has been Holly's modern class, and that's because, um, I love jazz as much as I do modern, or tap, or anything else, but, um, I was already so experienced with those other styles of dance, and um, pretty darn good at them, and so Holly's work was so new to me, and um, the first time that I had done a dance style that I felt so awkward at, at first, and was really a challenge for me, um, but now

having been working with her for over a year, um, it's like the most euphoric dancing I have ever felt, and it's amazing. And just the whole experience, of going from like awkward fish out of water to like loving it, has further opened my eyes to more possibilities in dance, cause um, I guess I just always assumed my career would be in the commercial industry, but having worked with her, and having been able to take that class, I have an appreciation for everything that's out there. Now, for my least favorite class, um, well, I don't know if this is fair cause I didn't stay enrolled in it, but Principles of teaching, um, basically, I went to that class for the first week, um, a year ago last spring, and I got in that class, and I think I turned to Lorene and said, "I have to drop to a dance minor". Because, and that sounds like so snotty and bad, but it's just because I was in that class, and I didn't, and this is really unfair because I didn't stay in it, but I didn't feel like it would teach me anything new, I was like, instead of taking this class, I should be teaching classes. People have offered me jobs to teach classes and I should be doing that instead of this, and that's what's made me decided to drop to a minor, because it would open up the time for me to go do those things. And I did, and I don't know if that was a better decision or not, but for me that class was a turning point, because I saw the syllabus, and I listened to what was going on in that first week, and I just said I'm not going to grow at all from this, and so I dropped. That wasn't the only reason why I dropped, but that was just a turning point.

Strengths and Weaknesses: Ok, um, well I guess I'll start with weaknesses. I've never had flexibility, just talking, like in the physical. Um, I've always struggled with that. And growing up, when we did pointe in Ballet class, my feet aren't very flexible, my arches aren't, so I always struggled with that. That's really the only big obstacle I've had as far as natural ability, or the physical. I've been really lucky, I don't get injured easily, but yeah, that whole flexibility factor is, ehh, a problem. Another weakness would be my body image. Um, you know, I guess like most dancers, I know that the way you look plays a big part in the work you can get, um, so I think I'm always self-conscious about that. And um, as far as just self-consciousness in general, insecurity, while maybe a strength of mine is that I can perform really well, and exude a lot of confidence, sometimes I can also be extremely insecure. Like in Jason's jazz class I may seem as if I don't give a crap about anything, and just 100% confidence and energy, when I'm at an audition with 500 other dancers, I'm a lot more insecure. And I can feel when that insecurity creeps up, and affects me, I can feel it, and it sucks, cause I know what it feels like to perform completely uninhibited, and then I know what it feels like to feel insecure and not be able to perform as well as I know I can. So, um, that's a weakness that I'm working on. It gets better the more I put myself in that competitive environment, um, strengths, um, it's so weird how related everything is, ok, cause, um, my body image, I hate how stocky I am, but since I'm so stocky and muscly I can jump really high. And I can do Holly's work, because I have a lot of strength. I have a really strong work ethic, it's almost psychotic, um, and that's in everything, in school, like, everything I've ever done I've wanted to be the best and just stuck with it, and so, I think that has worked to my advantage. People who, so far, have given me opportunities and jobs, have said that, that's one of the things they love about me, my work ethic. And that they love I always go full out, um, and I guess, I mean this is so cheesy, but I guess my greatest strength is I do love dancing so much, that I don't ever want to do it not full out, like I don't understand how people can mark it most of the time, I'm not saying that I never do mark it, but it's rare. It's not fun to mark it, why

would you want to mark it? Um, and like with performance, like I love it so much, like I'm not thinking about performing with my face or doing anything, I just dance, and it happens, and um, that's what made me do this, the love of it, and um, that's what I think has opened a lot of opportunities for me because people see that passion, or, so yeah, that's probably my greatest strength which is weird.

Hurt or Sick/Can't dance: Oh God. Well, hahaha, God forbid, I don't know what would happen, I mean it would depend where I was at that point in my life, um, but like at the same time, while I have been out here going to school and dancing, I have also been pitting in other things. Um, I've always enjoyed writing, and so I wrote for a newspaper one summer, and last summer I wrote for soap.com which is a soap opera website for fans, but I went and interviewed soap opera stars and wrote stories on them, and um, like I did not love that, but I just wanted to keep other potential passions open, cause I do like writing, and so if I ever do want to pursue that as a career I have like a few little baby credentials and experience in that. But yeah, I assume I would always, I guess I would want to stay involved with dance or the arts somehow. Dance Magazine? Yeah, totally, anything that would keep me creative. I'll tell you this, I don't ever want a desk job, last summer, and while it was a creative environment, I worked at a really big commercial agency for tv commercials, and I was surrounded by creative people, I was, being still at that desk all day killed me. I was like, I'm not going to do this, I'm going to dance. So, you know, don't ever want that to happen, and I don't think I should have to, so yeah, I don't know, it would just depend. But I just love being creative, like I'm kind of a nerd, I do like a lot of do it yourself stuff at home, I paint, and I make crafts, and so, like even if I don't dance, as long as I'm just creating, or even, cooking, anything, just as long as I get to be original,

Peers motivate to achieve higher goals: Yeah, of course. When I watch my peers dance I am inspired by them, um, and just watching them and being moved by them makes me want to dance more fully and better, um, yeah so really the connection is being inspired by them, and that inspiration increases my determination to improve or be more committed to dancing.

Learned at LMU: Definitely number one is to appreciate all of dance, and all of art, and that's sort of like a big philosophical question that I have been tossing around in my head, this whole time, and what I am essentially writing my thesis on, is that is artistic criticism warranted at all, because who are we to criticize another person's art, or style.

She believes that choreographers have mixed feelings about her and her choice to go to a university. When she assists for Company Dance, out of the eight or so faculty/assistants, she is the only one in school, or who went to school. Katie has to answer all the students questions, and they see she is in college and realize how realistic the choice is. She tells young students to come to LMU. Gregg Russell defends his choice.

3.) 20 years old.

I have been dancing for, I'd say 13 years.

Path: Yeah, Studio work. More studio than anything else. I started when I was seven, and I trained at a studio called Universal Dance Designs. And I actually focused more on tap, than I did ballet, which is now my foundation and focus. But, at that time I was just, I was doing a lot of performing. I think I was competing once a year in Las Vegas. I love dance competitions. And I did those while I was there. I was there maybe four years, and I trained in tap, but I was doing a little bit of jazz and modern, and, uh, ballet here and there. And then I think I was about twelve or thirteen and I decided to strictly focus, well, I didn't decide, my mother pulled me out of the studio and enrolled me into westside academy school of ballet, which is in Santa Monica. And then I was a student there for about three, two in a half to three years. It was all classical ballet, so I stopped dancing the other styles, I didn't take anything else, any other cultural dance.

Did you like that? Uh, at first it took some adjusting, because I wasn't, you know that's what I really loved to do, was the tap and the performing. You know what I mean, I just felt like that was more exciting, especially when it came to performing it, you know? It was just exciting for me, but, um, I just grew to like the ballet. It was challenging, and I grew to really like it. We did like the nutcracker, we did like our annual performances, but you know, it wasn't as much as before. We did sleeping beauty and some other variations, and summer programs, and that whole thing. And, uh, but I liked it. And then, I went to a different school, after one of the directors, well, she passed away, and I think she was the most influential one there. And when she left, I think, well they didn't fall apart, but it was just different, the studio wasn't the same. It became more about politics, and you know how that whole system works, with parents and pushy moms, and money. So, my mom took my sister and I to another studio in Culver City, it was called Conjunctive Points, and then that was when we, well, we still focused on just ballet, but it was Russian Ballet. It was actually, it was an open studio because there were different choreographers there, like it wasn't an academy or anything, like a school, like the other two were. This was more for adults I think, but we took with a trainer, a dancer, by the name of Yuri Gagoreav, a Russian Guy. We trained with him pretty intensely, and he had his own group of students that he worked with consistently, and my sister and I were a part of that. We just worked really hard, and again just focused strictly on ballet. We took a couple other classes from a few different teachers, like Reed Olsen, and Karen McDonald. Karen McDonald was modern, so we worked a little bit in modern here and there. And taking adult open classes. And then I did that for, oh man, maybe two years. And then, he uh, or actually the studio, I was enjoying it, I was kind of enjoying it, I was performing that much, and it became a little bit boring at one point, because I just took class all the time, focusing in on technique, just training, and I didn't really feel I was dancing as much, but anyway. That was from when I was about 14 to 16, maybe I worked with him for just a year and a half, but then, that studio took a new name, and a new, well not a new owner, but Debbie Allen came to rent it, she took over, and it became the Debbie Allen dance academy. So all of the teachers there were basically kicked out. And I remember the adults being so upset about it, and like writing to petition it. And I was just like, whatever, you know, I was really young, I didn't have too much to say about it. But, I ended up staying there. Like I would have moved with my teacher, Yuri, he moved to Katnap, in Venice. But I decided just to try it out and

audition for Debbie Allen, and I did, and I wasn't quite sure if I was actually going to do it, and be in the program, but I just took a chance, so I auditioned, and I ended up really liking the vibe, and so I stayed there. And that was 2001, I think. January 2001, I remember it being the beginning of the year. And um, I just stayed there, and worked with Debbie Allen, and the Debbie Allen dance academy, for, well just through high school, so like, maybe three years.

Did you compete with them? We didn't really compete, we just performed. Like she would direct her musicals once a year, and then along with the musicals we would have our annual recitals. Like a spring recital type, and that would be more like in house, so we would just have a weekend full of shows, and parents and family friends would come to the show. They have this one huge studio where you can just perform, and have performances there. So I stayed, and I really liked it, I got back into doing various styles of dance, rather than just ballet. Like I started to do African again, and tap, hip-hop. So that was actually like, man, that was like the highlight of my high school career, really.

In the musicals did you sing? Yeah, I did. I mean I wasn't like lead singer or anything crazy, because I can't sing, but it definitely involved all types of theatrics, you know singing and dancing, but I really enjoyed it. The first one, the first musical I did with her was Brother's of he Night, and that was at the fraud playhouse, uh, I don't know. It was just one of the theater at UCLA, I forgot what it was called. But, and uh, we would do the recitals, and just do random shows, just perform at different functions. And then her next musical was, Pearl, which I was also in, which was so much fun. Man, we did that at the Geffin Playhouse, in, near the UCLA area.

Defining moment: Yeah, I would say when I was working with a really influential choreographer, named Alexander Pllum, um, he passed, but his work and his enthusiasm, and his whole teaching style was just so motivating for me. And I just remember having to work extremely hard, more than I had been used to. I mean I would work hard, but he would push my limits, he pushed my boundaries for sure. And that was, yeah, that was really difficult, but I knew that from the hard work, and everything that I put into it, that I actually enjoyed the aftermath and like the finished product of being able to perform his work.

What studio was he from? He was teaching at Debbie Allen. Sorry, yeah, he was a teacher at Debbie Allen. And um, yeah, he was like the best, him and Karen McDonald, like their two choreographers who really have an impact on my dancing, and uh, they just help guide me, I think in the right direction. So yeah, that was it.

Decision to come to LMU: Oh, I, uh, college man. I think I was going to do something, where I was going to go to a JC first, and then come to like a university. Or, I think my mind-set was, come to a University for like a year, and then just drop out. Because like, at that time you know you see other dancers, or other friends who pursue dance straight from high school. And that's kind of like the norm, like no one really goes to college.

Did you ever think of not going to college? Yeah. I was like, well why should I? Because, you know, like for this to be a profession, you just have to go for it. You know, cause there is not

always going to be that opportunity for you. Well, that's what I was thinking. So, I said well, ok, I'll try LMU. I don't know why, I had just been hearing LMU. And I know that is was close, I'm from LA. So I said, ok, I'll go check it out. And, uh, I came to watch a class, and I was like impressed with the dance program.

What class did you watch? Tekla. I think I actually took the class. But nevertheless, I was like, wow, ok, they have a good program here, a great program. You know, like considering it's not a fine arts university. It's not like a Julliard type. I just didn't know what to expect. But, like I was happy, I was happy with what I saw. So I just, said ok, I'm going to enroll, and I'm going to go for it. And this was actually the only school I applied for. Haha. Yeah, so it was a good thing I got in. Because, otherwise I just would have been at a JC. Because, like I said, I don't think I was really focused on going to college.

As soon as you got here did you decide I'm going to finish in less than four years? No. At first I was like, ok, I'm here, I'm going to do one year and that's it. I don't know why I was thinking that. But, I just figured, you know, just to say that I did it, you know, and I was there. So, then, uh, I was talking about my ideas and my intentions with one of my professors, and he basically influenced me to choose a different path. He said, you're already here, you should graduate. He just put it in a perspective for me. And broke it down, and I was like, yeah. And then I was ahead a bit from the credits from the JC, where I was taking classes in the summer during high school. So I was like, ok, I'm ahead, so I'm just going to run with it. So, I sat down with Judy, and uh, she really helped me map out a three year program. Which I was like, ok, that's good, that sounds cool, three years will fly by, you know, and I'll have that time just to pursue it. And I went back and fourth for a while, more so recently, cause I'm getting closer to the graduation date. And I'm like, gosh, am I ready? Because it is so comfortable for us to just be here, we have a set schedule, and we don't have to worry about a thing. We go to school, and this is our job. But, a, to be in the real world, as they say, is a bit scary, but, I'm happy hat I made that decision.

Benefits: Oh, uh, going to college and tying that to dance. Well, I certainly didn't know about this whole Laban language for one. And then, Judy has given us these classes where she exposes different form of dance. Well, culturally speaking. Cause, To Dance is Human, there was a huge focus on like, Dance of Hawaii, and other stuff like that. I wasn't like, you know, I learned about other styles for one. And I learned just how to appreciate the different interpretive aspects of dance. I think there is a focus on that in fundamentals. That was one class where I was able to just break away from looking at dance as just a technical thing. Cause all I knew, before coming in here, all I knew with dance was that it had to look fierce. You know what I mean? Like I never really took time to go deeper, to like, just other aspects of it, beyond the technical part. Uh, so when I came here, it just kind of forced me to look at every different avenue with dance. And learning styles and forms, and I'm learning about contact, which is something I didn't really know about. I probably knew about it, but I didn't really understand the reasoning and facts behind it. But, we learn a lot about that. And we learn about music. That's different, as well. Uh, yeah, and I think that also, coming here, I think I have a strong foundation if I were to become a teacher, a dance teacher, I would feel confident in the information that I would pass on to other students, because of the information I received here. You know, all those packets, and just everything that they prepare us for is great in the long run, especially if you are going to be

teaching dance. So, I feel prepared for that.

Is the University setting right place to study hip-hop: Uh, sure. Why not? I look at Paige, and Hassan, and Jason, and they have managed to bring it here, and make it more than just a class, I think. So, I think that it's possible, and especially with those midterm things that they would have. Yeah, so I think, they put the effort in for sure, to bring what is really out there here. So, I would say yeah. We don't get to perform it, I mean we're not competing with LA's finest commercial dancers, but we are definitely getting a good sense of it.

Career goals: Career wise with dance, I would say perform with a professional company, and uh, which one, I don't know? I'd had my eye on Lines in San Francisco, and I am also really wanting to dance with Complexions based in New York. So I would ideally just like to work with those companies, and train everyday, and travel. Travel with companies, travel by myself, I mean whatever the case would be I would like to travel. And be able to experience dance in other countries, you know? And maybe, join some of those pick up companies in Europe. I think they have a lot of that out there. So, perform, perform, perform.

Are both the companies, companies that hold auditions and you sign a yearly contract, or do they just pick who they want? Well, I think Lines is more procedural like that, where they have like a contract signing, and yeah, I think that is auditioned based. Now, Complexions, they might have changed the rules, but from what I understand, they are more of a pick up type, and they just invite people they know. But, I don't know, they are kind of like evolving now, and trying to become more established. With the status of a major company. So yeah, I'm just going to try and, uh, what I'm going to try and do is put my self in that environment, and just take class and be there. And build a relationship with the people who are in charge of these companies. That's my plan. Network. Yeah, cause I could send a tape, but how many tapes do they receive, I wonder? So, I just need to be there, so they can just see me.

Biggest Influence: (Pause) Like positive influence? Haha.

It can be negative? Man, well, let's say my mom. I don't really know, I've had my ups and owns here. Like I think, uh, I'm not to happy with my attitude towards dance, that I have had here, personally. Like at the aggression that I have given. I don't think that I gave one hundred percent. I didn't take every class like it was my last, like I should have. Uh, I had the opportunity. LMU provides that opportunity to reach your potential, and work really hard, but I think that I got in a comfort zone. I went from taking three or four classes a day, to three or four a week. So, that was a change, and I, I just kind of got lazy with it I think. You know, I just got comfortable, and, not as much as in "shape" or whatever, as I was before. At least, that is how I feel. Uh, but then again, I don't know, maybe it was a good thing that I took a break from that whole teacher/student relationship, that heavy training. You know what I mean? I mean like that heavy studio training, I think that here it is more up to us. And I have that freedom, and I'm also having that opportunity to explore the ideas of artistry, which is different than what I was exploring in my different studios. So, there is good and bad about it. But, back to your original question, my



mom has just always pushed me. She never stops pushing me. Sometimes, I mean I don't always want to hear it, so that's why I would say I don't know if it is positive or negative influence. But I think, well, I'm sure she wants the best for me. She pushes me on a daily basis. Just, to give all that I can to dance, and you know, to put myself out there, to really work hard. You know? So, I would say that she's been, yeah.

At times, were you disappointed with the way that the program ran? Yeah. Yeah, there were a few times. I think that um, the professors here have genuine concern for all the students, and they are very sincere. And they take the humanistic approach when it comes to building relationships with the students, which is great. But, I don't think that they are, are don't think they really prepare us for all that the professional world throws at us. Like, realistically, when it comes to these performances, and these auditions, it is very cut throat anywhere you go. Either you have it or you don't. There's no compromise. There's no, let's be considerate of other people's feelings, they just give it to you hard core. Uh, so I times, I'm like man, they could be a bit more, like, hey get on your stuff. Like if they see a student being lazy and taking excuses with injuries, you know, or just not coming to class, I would like for somebody to say, or just get on us. But not in a way where it's like, you must be doing this at this time, but where it's like, just a more realistic approach. Just kind of like tell us off sometimes. And not where it's like going to say I'm doing this cause I care, but you either do this or you don't kind of thing. Cause I think that is what the professional world does. They give it to you real. And with professional jobs and things like that, as a dancer, you mess up, and they fire you from the job. You know what I mean. And that's just it. And so, I think they have a more relaxed approach. For good reasons, because we all know that, there are some things in dance, like there are some issues that can just really be bad things. Like eating disorders, and things like that. People can go crazy. But I think that they could be a little bit more harsh sometimes. At least for people who are really trying to pursue it professionally, because that's what the professional world is all about. They're just real.

It's rubs off. And I'm not blaming it on other people, ultimately, it's like my mistake or whatever, cause I shouldn't let things like that rub off on me, I should just be giving hard core energy and effort consistently, but unfortunately other people's laziness has kind of rubbed off on me. I know that there were times when I sat out and didn't have to, or just didn't come to class, and didn't feel like it, you know I've had those moments, and I just try to say, hey, let's go, let's keep it going. And you have motivational teacher's, like Holly, I think Holly is a great example of someone who is hard core, and pushes for things. Tekla was the same way. There are maybe like four people that I look to for motivation. I just appreciate you as an artist, and that just helps other people who are trying to find there way to better places in life. And that just makes me think, you know I do need to get out of here, otherwise...I don't see what I would do in another year. I would just being doing the same old thing. I work a lot, which I didn't have to. I think I have had like three jobs throughout the my whole college time here, which I didn't have to. But, my priorities were not in line.

Strengths/Weaknesses: Weakness, I can be lazy. I do not push myself all the time. It's the truth,

Path: I started dancing at a studio back home, not a professional level studio, but like a community dance class studio, where kids would enroll, and dance all year and then have a recital. I started when I was twelve, and then I started teaching dance classes there, just hip-hop, and then I went to another studio, I stayed at this studio, but I also went to another studio called motion underground. And I was on a performing team, dance troupe, and that was the adult team. I was the youngest, but that was because I didn't have time to rehearse when the Seniors were rehearsing, so I joined this other team. And, um, they were more serious about their dancers, as far as older kids, and stuff like that. And then, I graduated high school and came to university to train.

Decision to come to LMU: Well, I decided, my counselor told me LMU, I had never heard of it before, and um, cause I was like applying to schools like, UCSD, and UCLA, and stuff like that, and um, she said why don't you take a look at this school, and I did. I looked at the program at UCLA, and their program was a part of a World Arts and Cultures program, it was not specifically a dance program. So, they weren't focused on the technique, and stuff, that I needed to build myself as a dancer and a performer. Loyola Marymount offered that much more, and, um, I mean I knew that where ever I went I wanted to be a dance major, I didn't want to be anything else. And I thought, maybe a minor in history, or a minor in theater, but that really never came around. And the dance program at LMU has given me the technique and focus that I need, for my particular needs as a dancer. Because I didn't come in having jazz experience, having too much ballet experience, having modern experience at all. So, that's why the dance program at LMU seemed right for me. Also, Loyola Marymount in itself, I just came and visited, and gorgeous campus, and it's in Los Angeles, which is a good place to be as a performer.

Is the university the right place to study hip-hop: Um, I think, ask me this question now, and you'll get a different answer than if you asked me Freshman year. Um, Freshman year I went through a lot of different thought processes, Am I wasting my time? Should I just not go to school and just try to be a dancer? Or, should I not be as involved in school, and go take classes at the Edge, or Millennium? Or something like that more. They didn't even offer hip-hop, but I thought that it would be a really cool opportunity to broaden my horizons as a dancer, and um, my, like, while I focus on hip-hop a whole lot, I knew that expanding into other vocabularies would help me market myself as a dancer, and an actor. Just like if you can dance, and somebody says who can sing this for us, you can raise your hand, and you might be that person, you might get the part, over someone who dances just as well, if not better than you. So, I've always thought that it was a good idea to be well rounded. Um, but coming in as a Freshman I was definitely thinking, I don't know if this is a waste of time. Because hip-hop is all I want to do, it's really all that I want, and everything like that. But, um, I understood ballet as kind of a necessary evil, to heighten my technique in other ways.

Before you came here did you ever think of not going to college? Well, there were never thoughts of not going to college. But, not for personal reasons really. I mean, I always knew that I wanted to go to college, and, but there were, definitely as a performer, as a dancer, I knew that there are

different roads to take. Different people have different opinions about it. Um, but in my family, education is a really big deal. Like, my mother and father went to college, their brothers and sisters, their parents went to college, and graduated. And my dad already had his masters in his profession, and he is going back to school now. So, it wasn't really an option for me not to go to college. But, it wasn't that I didn't want to go to college. I really wanted to go. And I thought that it would be a good way for me to grow as a dancer, because I, while I was good as a dancer, I wasn't making the connections like some of my other friends. Like, Tony Testa, who like is going to college right now, but doesn't really need to for what he wants to do. Um, cause he knows a lot of people, and his mom was the kind of women who would get in the choreographers face, and be like, this is my son. You know, my mom was never that kind of person. She just kind of sat back, and let Eli and I do our own thing. So, I think that in retrospect, in the long run, college was the perfect place for me to come, but had you asked me this Freshman year, I would have been like, oh, I don't know.

Benefits in the dance world: Um, I think that I have met people, first of all, that have, that I will be able to know and grow with as far as students go, yes, but also, as far as faculty. Like, I have been exposed to a lot of different avenues that dancers and performers can take, not necessarily in the commercial world, but um, you know, working with Damon outside of school, and working with Hassan outside of school, um, or possibly working with Holly outside of school. I don't think I would have necessarily met those people, or had those ideas, had I not come to college. And, um, cause I would have focused mainly on jazz and hip-hop. Mostly hip-hop, or like, jazz funk. But I would have met other people, it just wouldn't have afforded me the opportunity to see what other worlds there were. As far as modern dance goes, as far as theatrical performance goes, and stuff like that.

Career goals: I want to be a performer. I want to be either on stage or in front of a camera, um, for my whole life, forever. Um, like everyone asks, what do you want to do when you graduate, and to tell you the truth I don't exactly. But I can tell you, what I'm gona do, I don't know what I'm going to do, but I can say what I would like to do, I would like to either stay here in Los Angeles, and do commercial stuff, like through an agency, and go to auditions, and go on tour of something like that. I would also like to stay here and do modern company work, with Holly, or Damon, or somebody else, who I might fall in with. I would like to go to New York, and be on Broadway, and have a musical theater career as well, or maybe do commercial work in New York, or modern company work in New York. I'd like to travel, like in Europe. I just don't know the order of operations yet, I don't know what I'm going to focus my energies on right now.

Agency? Kind of. I went to the Clear Talent audition, and I haven't technically signed anything, but they asked me to come and be represented by them, and I told them, you know I'm too busy with school, I can't right now, and I have to call them back, and see, um to be honest I'm frightened to do that, because they might be like, who?

But if you stay in LA you would sign with them? Yeah. But even if I didn't stay in LA, they have representation in NY, and if I do go to New York, I would like to generate a relationship with them, and say, I'm moving here, is there any way you could get me an audition with your office

there, or something like that. Because I think it would be, like while I can do a modern dance company, or something like that and you don't necessarily need an agent to do that, while I'm doing that I can continue to go on lots of different auditions, and continue to have lots of different jobs. Which may include waiting tables, haha.

Biggest Influence: Um, I think the what of that has been the opportunity to perform. I get a huge rush when I am on stage. I've done a lot of performing this year, which I am very thankful for. Um, I did a show, called J.O.B., the Hip Hopera. Um, that was the longest run of a show I had ever had. It was something like twenty-seven shows. And, um, while nights were different each time, I understood that I was going on stage, and that's exactly where I wanted to be. Um, and, so, just the thrill of being on stage, whether it's for, family, friends, or an objective thoroughly, of people you don't know. It was really fantastic for me. Um, I draw my inspiration from people around me. Other dancers who I see succeeding, and working very hard. Um, something that I am totally inspired by, is watching people's work ethic. When I see people working harder than me, it makes me want to work that much harder. Um, so, yeah.

Favorite/least favorite class: Least favorite class was math. Um, well, you know, I might even say my least favorite class was principles of teaching. Um, I just didn't like that class.

Reason: Well, I don't doubt that I'm going to be a teacher of dance at some point, I've already done it, and I'm sure I'll do it again. Um, I just don't see myself doing it in a school district setting. Maybe it will be in a university setting, or school, or something like that, but I am not planning on being an accredited teacher. Um, obviously the teacher was not my favorite. And it's not her fault that she was thrown into this class, and given this material that was not her own, and I understand that she is making changes in her material to be better suited for her teaching style, um, and also, it was also at three o'clock in the afternoon, and I felt like I wanted to fall asleep all the time. Favorite class, um, that's really hard, cause I love my technique classes for all different reasons. Um, hip-hop, always, I love. Hassan is a fantastic teacher, he is the first person I have seen bring an academic structure to a hip-hop class. Um, other hip-hop classes I've taken have just been like warm-up, and combination. And he really, he breaks down the fundamentals, one of my first teachers did that as well, but he was a little less thorough with it. Hassan brings in lots of different styles, and lots of different music, and he is versed in all of them. And I love jazz, I have grown to love jazz, I have never really taken it until I got to school here, but Paige has really, really been a good influence on me, as far as my work ethic goes, and just finding length in my body. Um, and like I said, work ethic in jazz, I want to work that much harder to accomplish those things in my body. And, jazz frustrates me a lot as well, as far as my flexibility. And I love modern as well, am I allowed to say that? But, Holly is such an intelligent teacher, the way she teaches makes me understand how the movement is supposed to be manifested in my body. Flexibility is still something I struggle with, but I feel in modern it is less of a focus than in jazz, and ballet and stuff like that. But I would say that Holly's class has helped me become more invested in my body. You know it's funny, because the performance side of modern and jazz is so different. Jazz is very presentation, and some would say surface level, but I really don't like that idea, it's just more frontal presentational as far as the connection with the audience, and

modern is, a more personal experience. You know more visceral, see what's going on inside the body. And the movement and choreography is just set up less frontal. You use the space differently.

Strengths/weaknesses as a dancer: I think my greatest weakness as a dancer is my flexibility. I haven't figured out how to access it yet. Um, it's all been an uphill battle, I feel like my leg should be up here, and it's down there. It can be very frustrating, especially second, I hate it, it's the worst. And another weakness that I have, I don't know, it kind of goes along with the flexibility, but finding length in my body. Paige always tells me that the energy seems to chop off at my wrists, so, finding length, keeping my shoulders down, and keeping everything contained. Um, especially in jazz, remembering everything at the same time. Sucking in you core, and drawing up through you legs, cause I'll feel like I have everything going on, and then my passe will be down at my ankle, or something like that. Um, my feet don't pointe very well. Um, and certain styles, I have difficulty picking up. Like, ballet doesn't manifest itself very quickly in my body. It takes me awhile to pick up those combinations. But like with hip-hop, I can crack out a routine, better, quicker. Um, then start finding nuances and stuff like that. So, I would like to be more well versed in picking up choreography fast, and then spitting it out. But then again, I have been doing hip-hop a lot longer than I have been doing ballet, so maybe, when I've done ballet for as long it will be better and easier, and stuff like that. Um, my strengths, I always think of myself as a strong performer. My facial expressions, while they can use some work, I love to ham it up, and I love the attention I get when I'm just being really goofy, or sassy, or something like that. I always make it a point in myself to have a really hard work ethic. You know making decisions about when I am going to take it easy, and when I'm going to push myself. Um so those are my strengths, performance and work ethic.

Hurt/Sick and can no longer: I think I want to go to culinary arts school. I'll still continue to act and sing, but I don't know, without dance, I don't know if I would pursue those things as a serious career, because I'm pretty good at those things, but what makes me a performer, is the "triple threat", the acting, singing, and the dancing. Because when there's no words and just physicality, it's better for me, when there are words, I feel it cheapens everything. But I think if I couldn't be a dancer, I would want to be a cook.

Peer motivation: Absolutely. Watching other people in class, seeing ways that they execute movement, and making it look good in there bodies, helps me to work to find that in myself on a daily basis. Also, looking at improvement of how students work. An example, is Lizzy Mulkey. She has improved in leaps and bounds, and it's so great to see. I love to see that. And I feel that, that has happened in me as well.

Most important things learned: Hip-hop is not the only thing that is important. That it's, um, it's given me an opportunity to be more well rounded, as a person and a dancer. I think I have grown up a lot in the past four years. That you don't have to have a huge smile on your face every time

you dance. From Karen McDonald I learned to have a shift in my perspective, and look at things from different angles.

Extras: Well, there's not a class that I take regularly. I wish I could, but it takes gas, time, and money. And with the schedule here, they have us dancing every day, so it's not like we have large chunks of time to go and take class somewhere else. When I worked with Damon it was less academic and more professional, which was awesome to see. Working with the performers was a great experience to see how they work, and see what I needed to change in myself. So, it was great to do that while still having the uncurrent of the university setting working for me.

5.) Path: Um, well, I started training at the normal three or four years old. I was doing jazz and ballet, and then I think I did gymnastics for a little while too. And then did competition dance team stuff up until I was twelve. And then I was on a company that got started within my studio, for I think about three years. Yeah, uh, and then was on teen dance company. So, and then trained their until I came here. So, um competition stuff for a really long time, like competition team and all that, and then I stopped doing most competitions and just did conventions.

How young were you when you first started doing competitions? Um, probably around ten. Eight, ten, eight probably.

Defining Moment: Um, probably because I did sports too, and in like elementary school I played basketball and t-ball and stuff when I was little. And I would always have to like my t-ball games with curlers in my hair and stuff like that, and then I began to realize that dance meant a little more to me than anything else. And then I just enjoyed it more, I had more fun. Like competitions and stuff were more fun than the sports, and that's just when I decided that this was something that I really want to do.

Decision to come to LMU: Uh, I was, this was like the first school that I looked at, and I um, well my dad found it, he was like looking up schools for me like junior year. And he, I had never heard of it before. And he found it, and I came and visited it, and took a class. And I liked it, and it was my first choice for schools. I liked it because it had like a variety of stuff. Because I hadn't had that much modern, just mainly jazz and ballet, and so that was cool, because not just one thing was prominent, it had a lot of different things.

Whose class did you take? I think I took Paige's class the first time I came. And then, I came again and my audition was in Jason's class.

Not going to college: No, I think I always wanted to go to college. Cause I figured I can only dance for so long. So, at some point I'm going to want some form of a higher education, even if it's still in dance, but like owning a studio, or being a choreographer, you know, you want to be able to handle your business in whatever you're doing. And 18 was a little to young to start doing stuff like that. Plus my parents have always wanted me to go to college.

Do peers motivate and push: Yeah, I think, um, there is a good amount of competition within classes, like a healthy amount. I know that for myself, like in a class, if we are doing across the floor stuff, if I see someone do it like perfect, and I'm struggling, you know I'm like, ok, I should do it again, and try to work up to that, and try to get myself to do it like that, and so, I think everyone, without having attitude towards each other, all end up having a good amount of competition and pushing each other to work hard.

Do people take away from that? Yeah. Well, I mean yeah, you can tell when people aren't really working, or aren't really there, and they distract you, you know? Like I'll come into class, there are days that I come into class so focused, and I'm just like ok, I'm really ready to work on this. And I won't really want to talk, you know, I just want to dance, and then people will be talking like all over the place, and I'm just like, ahh, I just wanted to dance. Like, ah, so yeah there are days when distractions happen, and so, but not everyone will be having an extremely focused day, so I guess that's just kind of part of it.

Most important things learned: To put as much into it as you can you're here. Like, take each moment as it is. Cause you come into a class and like when you walk out of a class you're not the same person as when you walked in. And when you come to that class like two days later, or whatever, the next week, you're a different person again. So, you know, take that hour and a half or that one hour and like dance as much as you can, dance to your fullest within that class. So, not like leaving anything, or like regretting that you wished you had put more into it, or learned more from that class. Cause it's like, we have so many opportunities here. Just to be able to have as many teachers as we do, and as many different styles as we do. I guess just like taking it all in, and taking as many classes, and learning from different teachers, even classes you don't like, and teachers you don't like that much. Like, be able to pick out the good things, and like not get negative about it.

Outside work: Um, well with TDC, so in high school, we had like we would get choreography done, we came to LA, cause it's in Northern California, and we got Tabitha and Napoleon, who teach at the Edge, they did our hip-hop, so we got to work with them which was really cool. Because I wasn't used to working with professional hip-hop choreographers at all. Because at TDC it's like you're ballet teacher, you're jazz teacher, and you're tap teacher, and that's it. So, that was cool, cause it was a great experience for me when I was young, you know. Like as young as 14 I got to work with these different choreographers. Um, I really haven't gotten, I wish I could have taken more outside classes here. But I don't really have as much outside time as I would like, or as much money as I would like, to go take classes. But, um, what have I done, um, the summer before I came here we went to Coasta Rica and did the World Jazz Dance festival. Dance congress, sorry. It's like Gus Gireona's thing, and it goes to different countries every year, and you enter pieces into it, and um, Jen entered her choreography into it, and got in, which was like a huge deal, she got third out of the entire competition. And so we like got to perform and we were in Costa Rica for like a week, or ten days, and it was amazing, it was like the coolest experience every. I like never thought I would get to do something like that. She was like, hey we're going to Costa Rica, to dance, and we were just like, oh, ok. And Joe Tremaine was there,

I'm just trying to think of other people, they had a lot of, oh, that was cool because they had like some famous choreographer from Italy was there and taught a class. And then there was like one of the big Costa Rica choreographers was there and taught a class, and so that was cool because we got things from other countries, you know, you're not used to that. You're used to like California dance, and like that's it. And so, it was like, all the sudden we were there, and the energy, like all the, cause there were all the kids from Costa Rica who took it, and they had so much energy, and just loved dancing. So, all of us, were like, oh we like it too, cause they were so cute. It was an incredible experience. And then, besides that, I've just done the conventions and gone on to New York City Dance Alliance to the nationals in New York City, and then I'm trying to think.

Do you have plans to dance this summer? Um, just taking classes. Back home? I'm going to probably be around here. Which will be a good thing, cause once summer is here, I should hopefully have more time, besides summer school and stuff, and working, I'll hopefully have more time to take classes. I would like to.

Would you take at Edge? Most likely, it's the closest thing. Millenium, BDC, but, all those. Yeah.

6.) Defining moment: Um, actually I would say this year at LMU I came to decide that I wanted to pursue dance. Mostly just because, I saw that it could maybe be possible. Just because I sort of found like, um, especially like in Modern dance and stuff, I found more a connection, like I saw it as more tangible to do dance as more than just a hobby, so.

Path: Um, I took class, I had been taking classes at studios, um, mostly ballet. It was really strict ballet training, where I would have like four ballet classes a week, and I would do pointe. And then I went to a few summer programs, so mostly just focused there, so that just kind of, and then I got more into modern as the years went by.

Were you ever a competitive studio? When I was little I did go to a competitive studio, but starting when I was about eleven and twelve it was just training, we did a few performances, but it wasn't competition.

Decision to come to LMU: Well, um I wanted to go, I wanted to stay on the west coast. And I wanted to go to a private school, with a good dance program, so, LMU fit all that criteria. And then, I also came and visited, and I liked what I saw. I took Paige's jazz class, and I was really impressed and excited about it. There were a lot of factors that went into helping me decide, it wasn't just the dance program here, the school and location, and everything. But, and the faculty. I did research and I was impressed.

Was it hard to make dance a major before you really knew you wanted to pursue it? Umhum, actually it was the end of my Senior year when I came and visited here. I took a tour and everything, and I talked to Judy. At first I was actually considering a sociology major, just cause I thought I could never actually major in dance. I thought I had to do something more academic,



you know. I was already thinking about what I was going to do after college. And then, she, um told me, that if it is something that you love and something that you really want to do, then do it. I don't remember what she said, but it was really like, "wow", so, I was like, ok, I'll take a chance, I'll do dance. And so the more I got here, and the more I got comfortable with this, I saw I could do it.

Did you ever think of not going to college? Uh huh, ah just going right to dance, see part of me kind of thought about that, but then I was scared to, I was like that just seems way too scary, cause I would have no idea where to start. Especially being in Oregon, I would have no idea what to do. So, I thought a little bit about it, but I knew I wanted to go to college. A lot of the classes I took at high school were college prep classes, so I was already focused on that path.

Why did you say yeah right away? Um, mostly just because the whole college application process, and the whole idea of college, was so overwhelming, that, like I had a few times, that my dad was like, you know if you just want to take a year off, just do it. So that was definitely an option that I thought about. But when it came down to it, I knew that college was for me, and that I should do it right away.

So even if you didn't go right away, you still would have gone? Um hum, yeah, I guess that's, yeah.

Right place for commercial dance: The right place, um, I think it can be. Um, depending on who you have teaching it. Like here I think we have good teachers and that area, but um, I also think it is important to get out of the university setting at the same time. Because, I've always wondered what the criteria is for people here to teach. If the teachers here, or the professors, have to have degrees? Do they, do you know?

Explanation of the teachers....

Ok, that's what I was wondering, because some of the most amazing dancers didn't go to college. And I think it is important to have access to all teachers. But, um, so, I guess, it can be. But at the same time I think it is important to get out of this flow.

Benefits in the dance world: Um, I think, I'll have benefits, just general knowledge about dance. And, I mean I think, like history is important, in just learning all perseverance of dance, because when you're out there in the dance world, I think I will have so many areas to pull from. Like I'm learning so much, like in modern and in jazz, in fundamentals even, you know, there's just like little things that I will always be able to take with me, that I don't know if I could get as much, not being in school.

Do you think there are things you are learning being in college in general, not just the dance department? Yeah, definitely. I felt like I have kind of come out of a box having been at college, even just in this first year. Like when I was living at home, I didn't even know I was living in a box, but now, here, I realized it is just so much different, and your eyes become so much more open to the world. So definitely, being in college has changed that.

Career goals: I'm still, like, of course I'm still trying to figure that out. But ultimately, I would like to be able to dance professionally, like have some sort of professional career. Um, but I'm also at college for another reason, and that's to get a degree. Just so I can have that, and be able to do other things. Even though I'm a dance major, having a college degree I think is important, so.

Are there other things you would want to do besides dance? I don't know yet, like I said, um, I said awhile ago, that I was kind of interested in Sociology. Something to do working with people, um I'm also interested in getting certified in Pilates, or some sort of fitness type training, but I figure I have lots of time, I don't have to figure it all out right now.

Biggest influence: Um, well since dance has been such a big part of my life, I think my primary ballet teacher, she influenced me a lot. And she was, she was a hard women to please definitely. And, I would go to classes, and she would, I mean if she was having, I don't, she was just hard, you know. Like she didn't cut you any slack., she only expected you to do the best, but she wouldn't praise you if you, I mean you would really have to do a fabulous job for her to be like, good job, you know? And towards the end of my training with her, she really started to notice the differences. And I started to get feedback from her, and I've just learned so much from her. Not even just in dance, but in life. Like perseverance and dedication, and just, she has really encouraged me to go with dancing, and to, in that way, so definitely.

Was she your main teacher through all the years? Uh huh, cause she was the owner, and the ballet teacher. So she was the one to get teachers from all over the US to come and teacher master classes, and stuff. So, she was really good at exposing us to different styles of dance, which was cool.

Favorite class/least favorite: Um, my favorite class, well my automatic response would be the communications class that I'm taking right now. I guess I just automatically thought academic. But, um, I'm really just enjoying that class a lot. It's interpersonal communications. Yeah, it's so fun, and I'm really enjoying that. So um, my least favorite was the math class that I had to take. But I got that out of the way, so, haha.

Would you have a favorite and least favorite in dance? My favorite dance class I would have to say, is probably jazz. Because I have never had jazz like this before. It's totally new, and I really like that. It challenging, and so, I just like the challenge I guess.

Did you ever take jazz before? I did take jazz, but it was really old school. Definitely not, yeah, it wasn't good. Um, my least favorite, I would say is probably fundamentals. But that's just because, ah, I mean, I think it is important what we're learning, but, it's just, it gets kind of repetitive and boring sometimes. But, ah, it's a valuable idea, I just don't love it.

Strengths and Weaknesses: Um, we'll start with weaknesses. Um, my weaknesses, I get really, I have the tendency to close myself off. Um, and so, I sometimes hold back a lot, when I should not be, because I am so worried about doing it right. I just don't let myself dance it, and that's

something that I continuously work with, to letting go more, and taking more risks. That's also hard, taking risks. So yeah, that's probably my weakness, well, most of it is just having such a critical eye, you know. And strengths, I guess, just discipline. Um, because this is important to me, so I don't mind putting in the extra time and the extra energy to improve myself, and the work that I am doing.

So you still work on things once you leave the studios? Yeah, like I am still thinking about it, and, um, not to say that I have this strict regime, when I'm doing things every day. But I strive, I strive to better myself, not only in class, but to, or to use the time that I have in class the best that I can. If I feel myself slacking, I like get mad, you know. I don't want to waste time.

Hurt or sick and can't dance: Um, I mean of course that is something that you just have to accept. And I like the academic side that I get here at LMU, and I know that I definitely want to continue that. Um, and still figure out what I would want to major in, and have a career in, and I'm not quite sure, but I would definitely want to stay on the college path and figure that out. But, I mean, I can't picture my life without dance, so if I can't dance, I would like to say that I would still be involved somehow. Um, I'm not sure, But I know I would always still think about it, and I don't know about you, but I always dance in my head, so I guess I would always have that to carry with me. Not necessarily have a career in it, but I'd find something else.

Do your peers motivate you: Um, no. Actually, that's kind of a, I feel like my peers opposes my focus at times. Cause, people who aren't dance majors, or who don't dance, I feel like they don't know, you know, they're always like, oh, why don't you skip, or like, why do you have to go to dance every day? So, they don't always understand, so then it's sometimes like, oh, I guess I could, or, haha. But then it's like no, you just can't. I feel like dancers have a certain sort of discipline, and I think it's hard to maintain it when you're outside the dance department.

Do you think once you're in the studio you're motivated by others? Definitely.

Most important things learned: Um, just, um mostly to be open. I am learning to be more open, and just the importance of being open. And I know that "open" is kind of big, but um, that applies to like every aspect of my life. That's just being open to more styles, and this year just recently getting into Holly's class. And that's so new, and it's frustrating, and, but I still want to do it, you know, cause I like the challenge. And, um, I like, oh this is frustrating, why don't I just stick with the modern that I am more comfortable with. But then, it's like no, like I think it's better to stick with it and open yourself up, and take on new challenges, even if it doesn't turn out to be your thing. And that goes to just being at college, and being open to new ideas.

Yeah sometimes you meet someone and you read them totally, and, well like, most of my first impressions of almost everyone I met are like completely different from who they really are.

Extra classes: Yeah. I actually haven't had the opportunity to take any classes off campus. Um, I thought that I would when I came here, and, um, it's hard, just because it is so busy. And also,

because I don't have a car, like some people do, and so some people go, and so it's not as much as I thought it would be. But, I don't necessarily think that is a bad thing, but I do wish that I could.

Do you think within the next couple years you will? I hope so. Yeah, I really hope so. Especially, not just going to class, but going to shows and performances I think its also really important. So, I hope I will venture out more. But also I think, especially first year, just getting more acquainted with campus, and finding a home, you know, before you go out.

Are you satisfied with just being here, and having your classes and rehearsals? Yeah, I do, for now I do. But, there's more.

The summer programs that I went to were just ballet. Well, that had a little bit of modern, but the focus was ballet. Which was good, because I got a lot out of that, just um, training, improving my training, and improving my technique. But I really, like lately, I don't think I explored the artistry side of it, it was just more, kind of technical. And maybe that comes with age too, cause I was younger. But I hope to do summer programs in the future. Definitely contemporary. Ballet and modern, but definitely more equal, not just ballet. I'm not to serious about it at the moment, I figure I have a lot of summers, and it's also money too, it's so expensive. I would not be able to do it unless I got some sort of financial aid.

So, this summer will you go back home? I think so.

7.) Defining moment: Um, I don't think there was ever a moment. It was just, I used to go, there is a college in my town where my parents teach, that has a dance program, I used to go to the shows there. I started taking class, and that was always what I knew I wanted to do.

Are your parents dance teachers? No, they are both math teachers. Haha. Yeah, no, they're just at the same school.

Where are you from? Minnesota.

Path: I started at the two studios in my town, and I was there for three years. And then, I'm from a really small town, so, yeah, in three years I did beginning, advanced beginning, and intermediate, and that was all they had. So, I went into the city, and I took there, I guess off and on, for five years. While I was doing that, I went to...my high school, it was a middle/high school and they had dance, it was an arts program.

Did you go to an arts high school? Um, kind of. It wasn't officially an arts high school, but it had a lot of focus on the arts. And I was there for six years, seventh through senior year. And, I did a few summer programs. And then my senior year I start dancing with a pre-professional company in the city. And I did community theater shows too, so.

How did you get involved with the pre-professional company? Um, they had an audition notice in the paper. And, I went, and it worked out really well, so, yeah.

Was it a modern company? Well, they did shows for children. So, we did, like Alice and Wonderland. They had ballet elements in it, and then, like the cards were tappers. And so, there

were all different kinds of disciplines involved.

Had you studied all the disciplines growing up? Um, I did ballet, jazz, and modern.

Decision to come to LMU: Well, I just came and visited, and I just fell in love. Everyone was so nice, and I took Damon Rago's class, and that was like the style, the athletic modern is what I am really interested in. And I watched a video of one of the concerts, and it was just amazing. It was like, I have to come here.

Were you looking at schools mainly in California? This was the only one.

But you knew that you wanted to come and be this far away from home? Right. There's not much in the mid-west, with small dance programs, that yeah, are decent.

Did you ever think of not going to college? Yeah, when I was younger, but basically if I decided to do that, my parents were not going to be funding me at all. So yeah, but once I got to high school I realized that it was a more realistic option for me. And I got more into modern, and I figured the training that I would get in college would be better. Yeah, I wasn't ready to go out, and try to make a living after high school.

Why when you were younger did you not want to go to college? I just wanted to move to New York, and become a professional ballerina. Haha. I don't know. That was my little dream.

Is the university the right place for commercial dance? I think so. That's not really my forte at all. I mean I never had any form of commercial dance before I came here. It was all classical jazz, so. But I think it is a great opportunity for the people who are interested, to feel that they have to move out here and start going to the Edge as soon as they graduate high school. There are so many ballet programs, and modern programs, and I think there should be more programs that at least have the option to focus more on jazz.

Benefits: I think definitely the connections. Like, Holly hopefully. Being able to take so many classes a day. And you're graded, so you feel you have to come, you have to be disciplined. I think you learn discipline, and you learn what it is like to dance multiple hours on end. It's an opportunity to find out what it is like to be a professional dancer, in some ways, rather, like the work it involves. To find out if that is what you really want to do. Rather than having to make the decision sooner.

Career goals: Um, I really want to be a professional modern dancer with a contemporary company, and I am really interested in aerial dance. Aerial, like trapezes, there are a few companies around, that it's aerial and modern dance mixed, circus arts, so.

Have you trained in aerial dance? I'm starting this summer. One of my old modern teachers from high school has started doing that, so I saw a few shows this summer, and it was just amazing.

Do you know the name of the company that you want to be in? Frequent Flyers. And Maeba.

Are there other modern companies that you know of, that you would want to dance with? Yeah, Zeon. It's in Minnesota, so yeah. I definitely want to go back to the mid-west. I'm thinking Chicago, I need a bigger city after being out here. So, when I'm done with school here, I'm planning on going back.

Would you ever think about staying in LA? Um, it's a possibility. I don't know, if I was able to get into, I love Bradley's work, or if I could work with Holly, it's a job.

Have you seen their shows? No, I've just worked with them here.

Biggest Influence: Um, I guess Deborah, she was the dance teacher at my high school. She became like my other mom. We toured nationally, and so like I just saw her, I had a two hour class with her everyday, and then two hours of rehearsal after school, so, we spent a lot of time together. It was a pretty small group of dancers. We had between one and ten dancers every year. So it was really close knit. She was just with me through the whole teenage years, so yeah.

Do you still take from her over the summer? No, she's moved. But, we're still in contact, we still e-mail. She exposed me, and gave me a lot of opportunities.

Favorite/least favorite class: I would say my favorite is Friday workshop. It is just amazing. That and modern two, I would say have to be my two favorites. Favorite academic? Acting, I don't know if that counts, but yeah. Least favorite, I guess I would have to say Jason's jazz class, just because I felt really out of place. I had never had that style before, never even seen it, and all these dancers had come from these competition studio backgrounds, I just felt really out of place. I was just there for a semester, first semester coming in.

Would you be open to taking it again? Yeah, maybe. In some ways I feel I should. Just to be more well rounded. But jazz really isn't my style of choice, so?

Are you taking any jazz this year? No, I should. Next year I'm planning on it. I'm taking hip-hop this semester with Hassan. It's interesting, I'm trying to branch out. It's pretty much my first time doing hip-hop, I've had a few random classes here and there, but basically, yeah.

Strengths/weaknesses: Strengths would be, I really love to perform. I feel I dance my best when I'm performing, which I guess can also be a weakness, because I don't do it as much during technique class. Focus, I guess. I almost become someone different when I step on stage. I am comfortable with jumps, and modern, but balancing and turns are definitely the weakness. Those are rough.

Have you been in all the concerts? I wasn't in the student last year, but both faculty.

Hurt/sick and can no longer dance: Um, you know depending on how severe the injury, I like to think I could still be involved with dance, either by teaching, or doing pilates, or physical therapy. Any other career goals? I love to be, cause I love performing, like theater or something,

but if not, I guess I would go into teaching of something non-dance, but yeah, elementary school, maybe?

Peer motivation: I think definitely. Some of the dancers here are just so advanced, especially in Friday workshop, we have a wide variety of levels, that you just get, like, there's Arletta, whose in Holly's company, and has obviously been doing the work for awhile, and I just think, someday...like, the inspiration, it just pushes me to be better. I'm like, ok, everyone else is doing this, I have to do it, at least as well, if not better. So, I think there is some competition, but it's not really between each other, it's just to keep trying to get better. It's like a family, it's a whole community, and I like that I know Seniors and Freshman. Everyone is just so supportive of one another. I'm from such a small town, that I was terrified of coming, like this is big for me. I just can't imagine being at, like, Long Beach's program. It's just so huge, and you never have the same teachers, and no one knows you, so.

Most important things learned: Time management. And I have definitely learned that dance is what I want to pursue, in whatever way that I can. Professionally hopefully, but even with a pre-professional, or an amateur company, for free, or non-profit, or teaching, it's just I decided that I would rather do it than anything else. Like I don't care about the big house, or anything, anymore, I would rather live in a small apartment somewhere, with three roommates, if I could dance. Which is something I don't think I was anywhere as sure about before coming here.

Extras: I don't have a car, so I haven't been taking classes off campus, but I'm pressing my parents for that. Last summer I basically worked. I have applied to ADF for the summer, so hopefully that will work out, it's at Duke University. And then I'm hopefully going to do the aerial dance thing for two weeks.

8.) Defining moment: Hum, yes, um, I don't think there was a specific moment, but, um, throughout my childhood I knew I wanted to do something not ordinary. I thought I wanted to be an actress, or I thought I wanted to be a singer, or dancer. And, just through years of studio dance I, I just kept, are teacher would ask like, does anyone want to be a dancer full time, and there would be a couple of us raising our hands. But, I always raised my hand, and I just thought that was something I wanted to do, for some reason, and it grew stronger over the years, there wasn't an exact moment, but. There's always the times where it felt like, oh, I really want to do this, like after performance, or, I don't know, just after working really hard, or practice, or something. But, yeah, I think it just happened over the years, I just kind of always knew that I wanted to do something with it. Yeah.

Path: Um, studio training. Last year was my first year at the arts high school in Minnesota.

So you just did that your Senior year? Yep, just one year. I did a couple convention things, but not much outside. The arts high school was only for Juniors and Seniors, and I didn't really know

especially, her rehearsals, I don't know if you ever worked with her, but you probably saw her piece, she's like really, I'm in love with her, like, everything she says in rehearsal, I'm just like, Oh my God, it's, I don't know, she's just so profound. It really makes you think.

Favorite class/least favorite class: Least favorite class would probably be something in the academic lines. I used to be really smart, I think, and then I really started slacking off in school, and, you know from dance, you're like always at the studios and it's hard to do your homework, and stuff, so I slacked off for awhile, and now it's like, I feel like I'm really behind, so academic classes aren't really fun for me anymore, but some of them can be, like Spanish is sometimes fun. But, um, in the dance department, least favorite class. Maybe, it would be fundamentals. Because, I kind of, I learned, I should have talked to Judy about it before, it's like my own thing, because I already learned this stuff last year at Purpridge, so like, now I'm just reviewing it. I didn't think about, like to tell her I already have a composition credit or whatever, but, I guess it's always good to explore things you already know, and work with it, but I wish I would have thought about it ahead of time. Favorite class, um, I don't, I like jazz, Paige's class, I think is fun. I like how she really challenges us, um, and makes us work.

Have you taken that style before? Yeah. That's like the stuff, well, not exactly the style, but kind of the performance, like competition stuff, I did all my life. And, I really like, I really like Holly. Holly's class, the way that she teaches is really...

Are you in her workshop? Yeah. So, I just started, but like, um, like some of the stuff she does I don't think I could ever do, and then, like she shows it across the floor first, and you're like, what you think I'm going to do that, and then, she breaks it down, she teaches you, and then all the sudden you are doing it, and it's really weird. The way she teaches is like, I don't know how she does it. But, it's really good.

Strengths/weaknesses: weaknesses is technique, and sometimes I, well, a strength would be, um, sometimes, I usually remember the counts that people gave me, um, I remember the way that they want it, like I can do choreography, I'm versatile, I can do it how they want it, not just my style. But, uh, sometimes I lead too much, and I don't watch, I'm starting to watch people when I dance. That's the thing that Karen got on me about, is that I rush sometimes, because I wasn't watching other people. And, um, like I'm a good leader, but sometimes I don't, I don't know, I think I just try to take charge. So like, if people aren't sure what they are doing, I always try to take charge, and like, jump the gun, if that's the phrase, I think I made that up. But, um I go too fast, and then, yeah, otherwise weakness, technique and that. Strength, I'm willing, I will get good technique someday, you watch me. I'm going to have legs like you, I'll be able to do turns I swear.

When you say technique, do you mean ballet technique? Yeah. At my studio, we did like, one day a week, less than an hour ballet, that our teacher made up. Who like never went to college for dance, and didn't know anything about ballet, except for what she saw. Although, up until last year, when I went to Purpridge, and started taking real ballet classes, it's really challenging, and it's just really hard cause it's frustrating, and I never get it, I just don't know what to do with my



arms. But, um, technique with ballet mostly, that's just something that goes into every kind of dance. If you have good technique you can learn to jazz dance faster, easier. But, probably modern, I'm definitely still learning modern, so, every technique, jazz, it's hard for me to go that fast, like in Paige's class, everything is so fast, it's hard for me to move my center, so yeah, I think all of them.

Hurt/Sick and can no longer dance: You know, I've rarely thought about that. Um, you know, I've never thought about that really. I would try to do something with it. I don't know, I would go crazy if I couldn't do anything with it. With dance, I mean it depends how bad it is, I would try to still choreograph, I really love choreographing. Or, um, working with the dancers somehow, I don't know. Um, you know, I really don't know. I never thought about that. I don't know.

Peer Motivation: Um, yeah. Growing up in a studio, there always told you to use other people as your motivation, as well as like the teacher. But like, if someone is kicking their leg higher than you, you kick higher than them. Like you push it, you watch other people. But, um, yeah definitely I see people doing amazing things and I want to be like them. And, um, I do that.

Do you see that here in all your technique classes? You know, your, I feel in technique classes here a lot of people don't take advantage of that, they don't, like when we're off to the side and going across the floor, a lot of people just like start talking, or, distracted. But I think it is a really good tool to use, like watch your peers and see, if they, like even if it's something bad that they do, or if it's something good that they do, you can learn from it. Every time that they go across the floor, or even just in performance, you can learn so much just by watching. And um, yeah I have, like Laina, you know Alaina is the piece. We always like tell each other like things that we do bad. Haha. Like, Sarah Anne, or figure always sticks out like this is ballet, you really need to fix that. Like, we, we help each other, because we both really want to improve. That will sometimes get, like sometimes it will hurt her feelings a little, but I'll try to be like, Laina it's really good, but just...So, you know sometimes it's hard coming from a friend, to get that, but I think it's also really cool to get that, healthy competition.

Did you two talk about it, before you just started doing it like that? Yeah. In the beginning, when we were first friends, we were just like, ok lets tell each other, just tell me whenever I do something stupid, and I'll fix it. So, yeah we kind of talked about it. Yeah, cause if I do something stupid, I want someone to tell me. You know, and people do, you know, there just not getting it, and no one tells them. And I'm like, oh I want to tell them, but I don't want to mean like, you're doing this wrong, but, for my benefit, I would just want someone to come up to me, and be like, hey you're doing this weird. Just tell me straight out, it's fine, I'll fix it.

Do you ever tell her when she's doing something good. Oh, yeah, oh my God yeah. I'm like, oh my girly girl you were killing that. Of course, you need that. And, and of course when someone says that about you, you like do it more. You're like, oh my God I'm doing this good, so you like do it way more, yeah. Oh yeah, we try to keep each other in check. So, I, I actually really like that a lot. It's good to have someone that you can just be honest about. Yeah. Intuitive

Most important thing learned: Um, I've learned to except change. Um, again, going back to Karen McDonald, my God, She, she talked, her piece was about shift, and change of consciousness. And, um, it was really good for me to be in her piece this year, like coming to college, cause it was really hard for me to leave Minnesota. I love Minnesota, and just all my family and friends, you know, if you grow up in a place, and you have to leave that, it's like a fish out of water, you have to start all new, and it feels like, oh my God, I used to be ths person, and now I'm this person, and it's really different. And, it's just, it's really weird to be away from something that you grew up with your whole life. And, um, just really, I'd get homesick, and I'd be like huh, and I wouldn't want to go out, and I wouldn't want to hang out with people, I'd just kind of do my own thing, but you have to keep on going no matter what. But, if you keep yourself busy, and you, you know you really amerce yourself in all the work you are doing, then you won't be as homesick. And, the change will naturally come. Like, sometimes I'd think, oh, I'm going to be such a different person a year from now, it's going to be weird, I don't want that to happen, but you just have to forget about that, and it will just happen naturally. You will change, no matter what, it is inevitable, but um, really just accepting it, and not bing caught up with, I don't want to change, or, I really want to change, or just thinking about it too much. I, just, yeah.

Were you scared at first, working with Karen? Oh my God, haha, I'm still scared. Yeah, she's intimidating, but um, in a really good way. Like, wow, she's amazing, you just don't even know, like, oh my God. Yeah, I was scared. Well, at first I didn't know what I was getting into, because she didn't have an audition, she just kind of picked people, so I didn't really know. And I remember the first day I came, and I was just wearing like a normal tank top, and other people were like, do you have a leotard? I was like, why? And there like, she doesn't really like shirts like that. You should wear a leotard and tights next time you come in. And I was just like, oh my God. I got scared, but that experience was really good. She really taught me work ethic, we'd be in rehearsal and we'd all have to work on things ourselves. We'd be, like she wouldn't really be up there, like, one, two, three, four, like she'd have the music on, like sometimes for an hour straight we would be doing our own thing. Like it was really hard, because you would just want to chill, and like watch people, like zone out, cause your tired, end of the day. But, um, it was really good discipline, and you really learned to take intuitive, and take the movement, and take the piece in for yourself. And I really liked, I really liked the way she goes about making he piece, she doesn't just give you stuff, she gave us some choreography, which is nice, but it evolved so much throughout the time. I really liked that, and I told her, like, I really want to be like you. I try to take some of the ways that she approached the work into my rehearsals. And try not to be like, just a regular choreographer, like how I grew up in the studio, they just gave you stuff, and that was it, it rarely changed, and you just had to learn it, you were just a dancer. But, to be a smart dancer and to make your own decisions is important, not just to do what people tell you to do. Yeah.

How has it been coming in as a freshman and trying to choreograph at the college level? Um, it wasn't as scary as I thought. We did a lot of that at purpridge last year. They really prepared us, and I wish I would be doing more of it, like in Fundamentals, I wish, I don't know, what I really miss about the school, and what I wish they had at this school, is they had, I wish, I wish and I wish. I wish that I could do more with choreographing and do more with composition, and um,

like analyzing movement and that stuff. I'm sure that comes in the later years, like right now I'm only a freshman. But, I already started doing that stuff last year, so right now I'm like, I'm really, like I crave that stuff. Or improv., like modern improv, oh, or like contact improv, I really want to do some that. And I should get out more, and take classes, but I just wish I could take more classes like that. Like I miss doing that, instead of just technique classes, which is really good, I need that. But I miss all the other stuff in between. Like dance history, like I'm sure I'm going to do that next year, but I already want to be doing that stuff now.

Do you take classes off campus? I actually did for the first time last weekend, at the Edge. Yeah, I took from Denise. Haha, yeah, I love her. But, um it's hard to get off campus cause I don't have a car.

Was that your first time ever at the Edge? Yeah, first time. I was so excited. It was me, Alaina, and Karen Reynolds. And, that was fun. It was, I was really scared though, just that's like, it's a professional studio. So I was really nervous to go there, but it was fun, it was really relaxed.

Extra: Well, I did, four years ago, there's this thing called Adrenaline that came to our studio. It was like a little mini convention, I have never actually been to a convention before, but this was a convention just at our studio, and they had awards, and for two years I got the scholarship to go to PCDF. They have one out here, and then one in Minnesota, so I did that for free. Which was cool, it was a really neat experience for me. That was like my first time, it was my Junior year the first time I went, and it was my first time out of Dancing on Broadway, which was my studio, so that was a really good experience. They, brought in a lot of choreographers. It was really cool, I loved it. I didn't really do anything else. We did like three competitions a year, but never the convention, all the other studios did, I don't know why we didn't. You know the studio kids get so caught up in that, they don't know anything else. And me and a friend tried to get people to go to prupidge, we were like, oh my God there's a whole world out here that none of you know about, and they were all just like, modern's weird though. You know the whole studio, like people think, that's really weird. But I really wish they would get out. And get choreographers to come out, you know people who are really out in the industry doing it, and not just people who own a studio and put themselves on a pedestal. You know, at least that's my experience with a studio. They just need to open up their eyes to the whole dance world, and let their kids see that too. Yeah, their four sisters. One opened it up when she was like eighteen. They hire a teacher from outside, and then she would get fired, just because she had different ideas.

9.) Defining moment: Um, no there wasn't a defining moment. As long as I can remember I always wanted to be a singer and a dancer, and I have no clue where it came from. I remember when I was little my mom had these little cowboy boots for me, and I used to pretend I was taping. And I was just always like, I want to dance, I want to go to dance class. And, that's just all that I really remember, there wasn't just one moment, where it was like, oh, I'm going to dance. It was something I just always wanted to do, and I always knew that I wanted it to be my career, my profession. So, I really can't say that there was a defining moment. But, that's just all

I've ever really known, and something I've always wanted to do since I was little, and something that I've been working at that since then. So, yeah, it's funny, like I've never really thought of anything else. Well, I have thought of other things, but they all center around dance. I think, well, if I'm not really dancing, what can I do that still works with dancers, or where I'm still around dancers. But I've always known that I wanted to be a dancer.

Path: Um, I started taking studio dance classes when I was in the first grade. I was about five, and, um, the studio that I went to was a performing arts studio. Um, so, it, we did recitals every year. Um, we weren't just a studio where you took classes and that was it. I mean we had a yearly recital, so we were constantly learning dances from the first day of class, that started in August. And, uh, I took, I started off just taking jazz for the first year. And then I started tap, jazz, and ballet. And I had been taking classes all the way until 12<sup>th</sup> grade, when I graduated high school. And, um, the studio I went to was actually really small. And, it was right across the street from my elementary school that I went to. And I found out about it from a friend, that was taking classes there. So, um I started taking classes there, and I stayed with that studio until 12<sup>th</sup> grade. And then, when I was in high school I also joined the dance ensemble, which was like the highest level of dance, and we went to New York every year to take classes at Broadway Dance Center, to take classes at Ailey, to observe the Dance theater of Harlem, and to, we observed Tisch, we observed the classes that were going on there. So, I was a part of that since I was a Freshman. I auditioned in eighth grade to get into it, and I was the first Freshman that they ever let into the dance ensemble, because our goal was to travel and experience dance at a more intimate level than we had ever done before. I went to New York, and I made sure that I got to go there every year. And, I knew that I wanted to make dance my major, so when I got to college, I knew that I wanted to go to college that had a good dance program. So, um I came here to LMU. I tried out for other places, some places didn't work because I hadn't had enough modern experience, cause I had never done modern before. So, I hadn't had enough modern experience, so then I came here, and I decided to focus just on dance, and my goal was to open up, dance professionally, and open up my own dance company. And I wanted to be a business ma, minor, but I never really got around to it. So, um I decided just to focus on dance. And um, so I made dance my major. And I auditioned for Ailey, and did their intensive last summer. Cause that's the company that I eventually want to dance with, so I thought I may need to experience this. So that's pretty much it, I worked pretty closely with some dance teachers, back home, you know in Berkley. And, that were well know in the community, so that, I could get the training, as much training as I could. Um, unfortunately I stuck with the studio I was telling you about for a very long time, and they weren't a studio, they were very limited.

Were they a very competitive studio? No, they weren't. And I was never interested in competitive dance. They had, competitive studios right around the corner, but I just didn't like the whole idea of competitive dance. I don't know why, but they weren't competitive. And at one point they told me, you know there is only so much we can teach you, and we think you really need to grow, you need to go to another studio. But I didn't want to leave, cause everyone knew me there, and every year people were excited to see me. I was the most advanced dancer there. So I really enjoyed that, and I didn't step out of that to advance. You know, some of the teachers wanted to leave, but they didn't want to leave until I graduated, or I left there, you know, so it

was just little stuff like that. But, um, I met this women when I was there, and she was like, well if you're not going to go somewhere else, then I will try to teach you some things that I learned outside. She introduced me to this other dance choreographer named Reginald Savage, in Berkeley. His mentality is so different, and in just one class with him I learned so much about my body, and my alignment, that I never even, no one even said anything to me about, when I was at the studio for thirteen years. So, um, but I was kind of afraid of him, like his teaching style is very different, and in your face. Yeah, so um, I started taking classes with him, but my plan now is to do his intensive over the summer. I don't think I will be able to go outside of California again. That's kind of the time line, or whatever.

Decision to come to LMU: Um, well I wanted to try Fordham's program, but I actually missed the deadline. So, that didn't work out. You know they're with Ailey. Um, and I knew I didn't want to do NYU. I auditioned for Irvine, but my ballet wasn't very strong. Um, of course at my studio I was, but then when you get out and see everyone else, it was not that strong. So, I got into the school, but I didn't get into the dance program. And then with Long Beach, again I got in the school, but not in the dance program because my ballet wasn't strong. So, um, my two choices were LMU, um, because my mother knew the man that works in the admissions, and I had spoken with him, and she wanted me to go somewhere where she knew what the area was like. And I actually came out here, and I really enjoyed it. I wasn't going to go anywhere just cause of her, I wanted to go somewhere that had a good dance program, and a school that I liked. And of course when I came to LMU, I feel in love with the campus. So, that was one thing. I met some of the dancers. I met Jason when I came for the tour, and I met Marjani. And I came, and I think I observed Paige's class. I really liked the teaching style and the combinations that I saw. And to be honest, I don't know if you were in it, I really can't remember, but I want to say that you were. But, I really liked the setting. And so when I didn't get into Long Beach's program I was really upset. And it was kind of a shock, like woah, maybe I'm not as good as I thought I was. And then, the nice thing about LMU was that I didn't have to audition. But the funny thing is, I didn't get into the Long Beach program, yet, I went and took class at Debbie Allen, and she personally told me herself, that she would give me a scholarship for her summer program. I was really kind of confused with that. So, I ended up not being able to do the summer intensive program, and then I didn't get into to Long Beach, so I came here, and I was excited about it of course. But then, my goal was to do all that I can, and learn as much as I can in as little amount of time, because I felt I was behind a lot for my age. And then, I said that I was going to audition for Long Beach's program, just to see if I can get in, and then of course not go. That was kind of my goal for the year, to increase that way. But, that's really how I came to the decision on LMU, it never was a regret. I think things happen for a reason, I think I was put here for a reason, and I'm really happy with it.

Pursue dance straight from high school and not go to college: Never. I always knew that I was going to go to college. Yeah, that was never an option for me. One, I knew my mom would never go for it, and two that just wasn't something that I was even interested in. I always knew I was going to go to college. You know that's what it was, you go to elementary school, high school, college. You know, grad school. And even now I'm not sure about that, but I always knew, that

was never an option to not come.

Right place for commercial dance: Um, in terms of the right place, I don't know what you, do you mean like solely studying at the university level?

If someone wants to be a hip-hop dancer, or a commercial dancer do you think they should go to a university to study that? Um, if the university offers it, I definitely say, I think it is a good opportunity. As if you're taking, I mean it mixing in with your classes, like you are able to take this class, I don't want to say for free, but it's almost for free, because it's already, well, it's pre-paid. So, you might as well, I say, if it's offered, take it. I feel if you want to really be a commercial dancer, or a hip-hop dancer, those styles for some reason, you really need to go into the community for. You do need to go into a studio setting for that. One being because the competition is a lot higher, and two, you get, you have a range and a variety of teachers, that can help you. Because with commercial dance and hip-hop it's so different, there's so many different parts to it. Whereas, you know, ballet, well, ballet specifically, cause modern has it's differences, but ballet has set steps, it's a technique that you're going to get no matter where you go. And hip-hop is more so an idea, first of all it's a culture. It's the way you move your body, but there are no codified positions. So, it's going to be different, no matter who you take from. One day may be completely different than the next day, you know. So, I definitely think you should go to a studio setting, and not even one studio, I think you should go to different studios. Different studios have different, they offer different things. And I don't think the university level, I don't even think it can offer close to what the studio offers for commercial jazz and for hip-hop. I think that they can give you a taste. They can give you an idea, but I don't think the University can give you a full on picture of what it is, depending on, like well, I was going to say if it's a performing arts university sometimes you get more, but I still think, having the ability to take from different teachers, at different times and different days, I think that you just get much more.

Benefits in the dance world: Well, one, I think, well, I think a benefit will be, I mean I get a degree in dance. I'll have like a little label behind it. I think depending on, you know, how well known the university is that you went to, um, well it may not even be that way, because dance is different than academics. I don't think with dance, I think with money in general people like to look at labels, and stuff like that. I think with having degrees, and getting your masters, people assume that you know more, than someone who doesn't, simply because you have gotten this title. Although, that is not necessarily true, because someone could be studying at a studio with teachers, and of course those teachers teach in the studio, as well as at a university. So, you're getting the same teachers, in some cases. Um, I lost my train of thought. Oh, what I was going to say, I think if you want to get into a company, I think experience is valued a lot more than labels, like even if you have studied in studios your whole life, but if you worked with the top choreographers, local choreographers, I think you can get an experience just as good at being at a university. The only difference is that, you may not have a label, or a title, that says, I studied here. I committed four years to studying with this one person, or this one technique, which I'm sure you probably could have done, but you just don't have the label. But I think, if I am trying to teach at the university level, and when dancers look at your biography, and they see where you

studied, especially if you are well known, where you studied, and how long you studied, I think they look up to you more. They feel as if you are more qualified to instruct them.

Career goals: Yeah, ok, these were my set career goals... I was going to go to college, um, major in dance, then go to grad school, and of course dance would be my focus as well. Um, well, actually in college I wanted to major in dance and minor in business, and continue with that in grad school, the both. Um, and then I wanted to dance with a company. My main goal was to perform, and tour with a company, and namely, Alvin Ailey. And then I wanted to then open up my own company. Um, now it is pretty much the same, it's a little tweaked. Um, I still want to go to grad school, but I'm actually not sure which grad school I want to go to. Um, I'm not sure if I'm going to go, I wanted to go right after college, and I'm not sure if I'm going to go right after, although, I want to. But I'm not sure if that is going to be what I actually do. Especially if there is another opportunity.

Would you want to stay in LA? For grad school? My goal is to go straight to New York. And study out in New York. If there is an opportunity out here for me, then I might stay, but at some point I want to, and I feel that I need to be out in New York. So, that was part of my goal, to do college, and then go to New York. Um, and like I said I wanted to dance with Ailey, but now I'm not sure if that is the only company that I want to be with. I've looked into a lot of different companies, and I feel that there are a lot of companies that I would be interested in, as well as Ailey. But, um, especially companies that may not be all black dancers, because I wanted to be in an all black dance company. And now I think, that there may be some companies that aren't all black, but could stand to have a little integration. Or that I just really like, and want to be in. So, um, that would definitely be an option. I'm really trying to explore all my options, I mean like teaching at a studio, and teaching at a university level.

Would you ever think of going back home? Yeah. Not at the studio that I went to. Actually, you know what, I never thought of going back to that studio. I probably, I would say no. But then, there's no reason that I shouldn't. Like, initially I might say no, but then thinking about it, if I went, I think they are hurting for teachers. See that's the problem, the teachers are getting old, they have been there for awhile, and they are kind of running out of steam, and they are not really up to date with what is going on right now. So, I actually could help there. I didn't even think about that. But, my main focus was either LA or NY, or I guess the Bay Area, but I never thought of that studio, which is funny that, that never crossed my mind. But I would definitely teach back home. I wasn't sure where I wanted to open up my own company, but, um, the Bay Area, LA, and of course NY, are my options that I've looked into.

Biggest Influence: Wow, biggest influence, I've had a lot of influences. Um, well I want to say my mom, cause she has supported me the whole time.

Is it just you and your mom? Yeah. That's the other reason, cause it's just me and my mom. So, she supports me through all my dancing. Um, but I've had different influences for different things. I want to say Alvin Ailey has been an influence for me. Because I see a successful African American dancer, that has a successful African American company, that is thriving after his

death. And how people of all races flock to his company, and flock to his performances. And there's just a dedication there, that to me is very inspiring. And when I see his dancers, just watching his dancers, they really inspire me to work through my classes, cause it's like, I want to do that. I want to do that solo. You know, I want some other dancers out there saying, I want to look like her. You know, so a lot of times when I'm dancing I'll get images of them, or poses that I have on posters, where I'm like I want to look like that.

Have you always known of them? No. Haha, I didn't know of Ailey until I got to high school. And uh, the funny thing is, the first performance that I went to, I actually feel asleep during the performance. And everyone was like, oh Alvin Ailey this, and my dance teacher was like, oh Alvin Ailey, you need to see them, because that is definitely where you are going to be. And I was like, at the time, I didn't even like modern, cause all the modern that I had seen was like really abstract modern, and I really didn't like it. And so, I was like, oh, they're modern, I'm not going to do that. So, I went to the performance, my grandmother got me tickets, and I went, I think it was just because it was late at night, and I had just come from dance class, it was dark in the theater, and the seats were just so comfortable, that I feel asleep. And so, I just wasn't impressed. Everyone was talking about it, and I just told my teacher that I was not impressed at all by Ailey. She said, are you serious? And I said Yeah. And then she was like, Rachel I'm telling you I can definitely see you with Ailey, that is definitely the route that you are going to go. And I was like, no no no, I'm probably going to do jazz. And the jazz that I did was not commercial jazz. I don't know how to describe it, well, it was more lyrical, but I guess our lyrical was not very competitive. And neither were the dancers. So, there wasn't this healthy competition going on in class. So, yeah, she just kept saying, Ailey, Ailey, Ailey. And I was like no. I don't like modern. And so, we went to New York, and we took some of their classes, and I saw pictures on the wall, and I was just like, wow, these dancers are serious. Everybody was there, and everybody wanted to go there. And, I thought, ok, ok. And then, I got to see another performance. And I was like, ok, I'm going to stay awake this time, there was so much talk, and everyone knows about them. When I saw the performance I was crying, I feel in love. I don't know if it was because I had the chance to grow a little bit as a dancer, but I don't even know how I couldn't have enjoyed it the first time around. It was amazing. And to me, what was even more amazing was the dancers were black. And so, I could relate to them more. So, my first experience with Ailey was a little misguided, I'll just put it that way. But, now, I, I love Ailey.

Have you seen them again since then? Yeah. I saw them when they came to LA last year, and then I saw them in New York over the summer. It was a more intimate performance, inside the Ailey studio. And so I was very close to them, in the new facility and everything, so it was really nice. And I got to see one of my favorite solos done, it's the male solo. I think he calls it, For Mama with Love, or something like that. And I bought there DVD from a long tie ago. And then, I've seen revelations a lot, because my dance teacher in high school showed it, and then they show it here all the time.

Favorite/least favorite class: My least favorite academic here has been, um, well, I kind of want to say, well, no it was math. My teacher was very dry and dull, she taught facing the board with her back towards us, and I ended up having to take the class over again. Which was much better. I didn't take the basic level, I took pre-calculus. And um, cause I had taken it in high school. And



those are definitely options, but it would definitely devastate me if I couldn't perform. You know, so.

You mentioned studying business before. Would you want a career in the business world, or would that be to help you with having a company? That would be to help having a company. Knowing how to start it, and how to maintain it. You know, how to run it. That was the only reason why I would want to major in business. And, I think now, like I have friends who are opening their own businesses and starting their own things, and it's like, woah how are you guys doing this. And, so, I'm thinking you know, those contacts, you don't just let them go to waste, you can collaborate, and help each other in certain ways. And so, I think being able to have that knowledge of business will help me, even if I don't open a company, maybe it will be to help someone else. My old dance teacher is also a psychologist, and she, she and her husband just opened up their own business, and even though she never went to business school they have a very successful practice. So, I have thought about maybe having an internship with her, not to learn the book side of it, but to learn and experience the other side of business. You know, so I'm just happy that I do have people that have had successful companies, that can guide me. So it's not just, well the book says this and this.

Peers motivate: Um, yes. You know what it does, and I'll give you an example. When I went to ACDF, in Long Beach, um, the first class I took was a modern class and it was huge, and I was like, God there are a lot of people here, but every single person in that class was dedicated. And no one was playing around, everyone was there to dance, everyone was dancing there full potential, no one was like, oh I'm tired today, or anything. But you know, everyone was there for a reason, and you could see. That made me dance harder, it made me dance in a way that I hadn't danced in a long time at LMU. And just being surrounded by people who aren't afraid to dance full out, you're like, oh, we're doing that, ok. You know, I'm like why am I not doing that? The whole ACDF experience helped me see how the university classes should be. When I would take classes here, and then go somewhere else, it was just like the mood and the attitude was different. It was a little more competitive for some reason, out side. Just classes at LMU, not everyone works their hardest, and you can tell that people don't really want to be there. When I came back to LMU (after ACDF) it was just such a difference, it was dryer in a sense, and it almost frustrated me. I could see the people that weren't, that looked as if they didn't care. And I realized that, that was making me almost not care, and making me not dance to my full potential, because everyone else wasn't. But then I realized that I can't let what everyone else is doing effect me, especially in a negative way, if it's not helping me be the best that I can be. And, even when jazz six, when you guys came to our class the last week, the energy is completely different. Cause, I don't know if it's like, oh, we're jazz six, we're the best, so we dance better. I feel like everyone was dancing harder. The energy was different, people were smiling and laughing, but everyone was working hard across the floor. You helped jazz five. When you're not there, it's boring watching us go across the floor. It's just not entertaining. There's just different elements, I don't know if it's jazz five wanting to show off, like, we're good, don't think we're bad, but it's totally different energy. So, I think peers can effect how you take class.

Do you think there are times when peers have the opposite effect on you? I tried looking at that. And sometimes it's not. But it happens when it is the same people over and over. When people

say, I hate this class, I don't want to go. No, I mean when they say that, I'm like, don't go to class. They don't really effect me when I hear them saying things like that, but then when they are dancing like that, I'm kind of like, it frustrates me. Cause I know, well, I've taught before, and I know it frustrates the teacher when the dancers are just there, and they're not really doing anything. Um, but I think when people say stuff like that, it changes the mood of the class. I try not to let it effect me.

Most important things learned at LMU: Um, I've learned that it really takes a lot of outside work to be successful at something. You know, just scratching the surface of something, it will take you somewhere, but it will not get you to where you need to be. And that, if there is something that you don't like, you need to fix it. Um, and I've also learned, that I'm lazy, I'm a lazy dancer. I haven't gone and taken many outside dance classes, which I should. And part of it, I mean I say is the money, which is true, for me it is a struggle to pay thirteen dollars for every extra class that I want to take, but I mean, there, I've made as many efforts as I can to take as many classes as I can on campus, but I haven't made an effort to take things on the weekends, sometimes I don't do anything on the weekends. There's even a salsa class that I want to take, that I haven't even gone to yet. So, I've learned that I'm lazy when it comes to my dance, which is why I'm behind in certain areas. You know it's up to me to change that.

Are you satisfied with the amount of classes available to you on campus? Yes, it has been enough. Every semester I have had at least eleven classes, which most of them have had dance. I think it is hard when most of the dance classes are on one day. It's been good for me, because I have been able to take ballet every day, well, Monday through Thursday. So, yeah definitely it's been enough for me. I am on the performance track. But it's funny, cause the exact number of classes I had been taking since freshman year were the same amount required for the track. I think I have been taking the right classes for me to improve. In terms of things that I learned, I think that, that is the biggest thing. Like until I got to college I never did any dancing over the summer, because my studio was closed during the summer. So I need to make sure I'm doing what I should be doing. I think you're dancing shouldn't stop just cause school stops. But I also think, as dancers we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to dance through injuries and stuff. And I think sometimes you need to take care of your body, and your mind, and sometimes you just need a break. You need to be able to recognize when that time is, and not feel bad about taking a break.

I think there is more room for growth in the university. In the studio if you don't get it, you don't get. The teachers are really admit about helping the students, and you don't get that kind of attention at a studio. There isn't as much room for questions in the studio.

10.) Training: Starting in college, intensive training = three years.

Dance Major, Art Minor

Defining moment: Um, I don't think there was an exact moment that I decided dance was the thing, but uh, in high school I always played sports, and, um, it was like the basketball season, and it was going to be my Junior year, and I decided not to play basketball, and, I was working on a partner competition, and I always get injured playing sports, sprained ankles, and you know, so, I decided not to play basketball and focus more on dance. And that was a big fuss at my school, cause it was a small school, and like, "Nick's not going to play basketball", and, basketball was like the big thing at my school.

Were you the star of the team? I wasn't like the star of the team, but I was one of the better players, cause there wasn't that many people, so.

Where are you from? Sacramento.

Path: Yeah, well I did, I started with West Coast Swing. And, uh, we have what we call Eurythmy at my Waldorf, high school. But anyway, we needed a teacher, the teacher got fired, and, so for the second half of the year we needed a teacher, and they hired a dance teacher. And so she was teaching west coast swing to the class. And, uh I started liking it.

This was just an elective in high school? Well, it was a mandatory class, we didn't really have much electives. It was a really small school, like my graduating class was twenty-five people.

Was it a private school? Yeah, it was private. It wasn't like a Catholic or Christian or whatever, it was just a private school. It was more focused on the arts. So, I started taking it, like I went in at lunch, and I went with Lisa and some other friends, and started taking it outside of school. So, it kind of started like that, just for fun. And I was like, oh, I'll just go dance, I'll dance with my girlfriend. And, uh, we started taking privates with the teacher. And she was like, you should pursue this more. And so, we went down to San Francisco, with Tom Slayter, and he does adagio lifts, and, uh, so we kind of focused on that. And, we were doing west coast swing, and adagio lifts, and we kind of combined the two. And there was this competition coming up, it was more focused on modern and ballet, but we just entered it for fun, to see what happens. So we did a Blair one lifts piece, and um, Tom Slayter, who we were training with, was like, if you guys are actually serious at all about this, you need to take, ballet, jazz, get as much training as you can, cause you guys have no training. So, we started to...

Did Lisa not have any training either? No, she took a little ballet when she was younger, I think, but not really.

So, we started, we took like one ballet class a week, you know. It was pretty hard to be motivated, because there was school and then dance, you know. So, it was kind of hard to focus on it. And, that was like a year or so before college. Then, I came to college and did all this stuff.

Decision to come to LMU: Well, I had to choose a dance department that, cause I had like no training, so I didn't know what a plie rarely was, and, so I choose a program that I could be excepted into. And then, of the ones that I looked at, just, I think the main reason I choose LMU was Judy, just like the person she was, and it kind of reminded me of Waldorf, just the atmosphere, and the dance program.

Not going to college: Not so much, especially not like pursuing dance, cause at that point I like didn't dance. You know, like I barely went to school dances. So, at that point it wasn't really an option to, like it was an option not to go to college, but I didn't really think of hat option. It wasn't an option to pursue dance.

Right place for hip-hop: I'd say maybe no. Not being that involved in it, I don't really know that well. But, as far as hip hop goes, it seems like, everything that's being created, it's like, it's not structured yet. There's like tons of stuff being created, and that's all happening outside. So, it's hard to teach it I'd say, because it's, they haven't codified a way to teach it, you know what I mean? As far as hip-hop classes go, usually you just go, and you learn a routine, and there's not, you don't really work on any sort of technique, you know. The teacher can't really give you corrections. The first hip-hop class I have had like that is Hassan's, and he will actually like break down the movement, and you'll warm, you'll do a warm-up to like practice popping, and different stuff, so like that class you can kind of work on your technique. But others you just go out and like dance. So, I don't think I answered your question.

Benefits: um, I'd say, like, huge, a really broad, a, like a big variety is what I'm trying to say, different styles. Different techniques, like different, um, like I've already taken a few different styles of modern, you know, and I never really. Like, when I first came to college, I didn't really, I was focused on like West Coast Swing, and I hadn't taken any modern, I had seen a little bit. And I was like, that's kind of weird, I don't really know what is going on with it. And then when I finally took it, I was like, this is awesome, and I really dug it. And now I've taken a bunch of different styles, and out of the dace styles I might pursue, I'd say that modern is definitely up there. And, if I didn't come to a university, I wouldn't have gotten that exposure, you know, so.

Career goals: Right now I'm studying Argentine Tango. And, I love that. It's awesome.

Where do you study that? We study, I study with Lisa, and we go off campus, we go to, we take private lessons from, these two teachers from Argentina, Miriam and Larici Hugopatyn there like world renowned, there amazing. So, we're studying with them right now, and I'd like to do something with Tango. I'd love to, there's not really competition, cause it's from Argentina, and there's like Americanized Tango, which is like the whole Ballroom scene, and I'm not really into that. So, like perform the Tango, and then maybe open up a studio at some point. I think that would be really fun. A studio that is just Tango. Well, not necessarily, I would be open to having other types of dance, but it's definitely, I'd say a different environment, so, it might be hard to do that, you know. To have a Tango environment, and then also have like ballet kids running in and out every day...it just might clash a little bit, so I'd have to see. But, I'd be open to it. So, that's, that's kindof what I'm focusing on now, but I'd also, I really enjoy modern, like contemporary, like I love Holly's style. Um, so it's possible that I might try to pursue that, and go into a company or something. We'll see.

Biggest Influence: Um, I'd say, Mariam Hugo, for one, cause they kindof, for one they're

amazing, and if I could reach that level, I would be thrilled. But also like, they teach out of their home, and they're doing really well with teaching Tango, they travel all over the world. Like, it hard for us to schedule lessons with them, because their always traveling, like they'll go to Spain Italy, or.

So you don't have a set, like Tuesday nights at eight? Well, we kind of do. We have Tuesday nights at seven thirty actually. But, uh, like sometimes they'll go out of town and we'll have to miss a week or so. But, uh, and they were like gone for awhile this summer. And so, like what they do, and how they've been successful is really inspiring. Also, maybe Holly I'd say. Because I love her style, and I also love her dedication, which is also inspiring.

Are you in workshop? I was last semester. This semester I'm in photography and it kind of like over laps, and I didn't know it was going to, so I was a little disappointed, so. But uh, hopefully, I'll be in the class next year, so.

But last semester was your first semester working with her? Yeah. And then I have Yoga too.

Favorite class/least favorite: Huh, I don't know if I can say this. Um, at LMU, right? Favorite class, can I give you two? Cause they're different styles. Um, Holly's workshop last semester, cause I love the style, and also, I really love Hassan's hip-hop class this semester. Cause that's, I've always wanted to do, like I've always loved hip-hop, like that class is so different than any hip-hop I've taken, you know. And like it gives the basics, like the basics of breaking, and stuff like that, and know one really offers that, I'd say. Like the way he breaks it down, so, that's a really, really fun class. Least favorite class... um, might actually be Sharon's modern class last semester. Um, it was kind of a hard class, cause I didn't really like the style, I didn't really like, it wasn't enjoyable for me. but, I'd say more than that, I kind of clashed with her, and like the way she taught, she really irritated me. I'd say it was more of a personal issue with her, and how she taught, but uh, that kind of ruined the class for me. Even though I didn't really like the style, it was really good for me. Like it improved me in different ways, just like being versatile, and all the different styles will help me be better in whatever I do. And uh, I knew that, and I was trying to focus on that, and uh, try to cut her out, you know she's teaching it however, and that's her thing, but it just really got in the way of it, and it just made the whole experience, the whole year actually, I took it for two semesters, just really crappy, so.

Strengths and weaknesses: Hum, um, I think that I can pick up movement really well. Like, choreography, and also like the style, and uh, like mimic it really well, and uh, not really well, but pretty well, I guess. And um, I can remember combinations well. I'd say, weaknesses, I always look down, so I need to look up, and project more. Um,

Even with Tango do you look down? Yeah. And it's also hard with Tango, cause Lisa's shorter than me, and I'll look at my feet sometimes, and then also if I'm just looking at her it's also kind of down, so it's easy to just drift to my feet. But, uh, I'm working on that, but that's definitely a weakness. I'd say I'm really dedicated, and I try really hard. So I'll focus, and I'm really determined, and I'll work til I get it. Maybe, also a down side of that, is if I don't get it, I'll probably get frustrated.

Hurt/Sick and can't dance: Um, I would, love to do something with art. And also, I'm one of the student managers at the Lion's Den, cause I think, and I think it would be really awesome to have, to own a coffee shop someday. Like kind of, I was saying that I want to own a Tango studio, and I was thinking, like right below it, a coffee shop. So, that's kind of like the whole picture, so I guess I could do that. A small little hole in the wall, central perk style, or something like that. I think that would be fun.

Peer motivation: Do you mean like dancing with my peers? Or, like, my friends will be like, dance harder Nick!? Ha. Either. (Long Pause). I'd say, (pause) I don't know, I never really thought about it. But, uh, I'd say, the upper classmen motivate me more, now I'm starting to be an upper classmen. But, uh, it's always like, it's inspiring to see, you know what you can be. You know you want to look higher. You put yourself in a more advanced class, and you are going to progress faster. Um, I'd say it's a good environment to study in, so in that way it would inspire me. And uh, you know I've never done this, so I might be wrong, but it might be harder in the competition world, just like going out, it might, like, kind of wear on you. And being supportive of all your peers I'd say is definitely a good thing.

Um, I say yeah. I mean, I consider myself at the top of always pushing myself, but I guess in like any class you can see, see someone doing something in a different way, and just being in class with other people, if I wasn't at LMU, and I wasn't able to take all these classes, I would be exposed to that.

Most important things learned: Um, I'd say learning how to work with people, has been a big thing. Uh, learning how to be a roommate with people, along the same lines, maybe. But I lucked out with my roommates freshman year for sure. All the things I learned...my dance education I'd say is very valuable. Um, not really a specific thing, but just learning more about myself, and about who I am, I guess, you know. I think definitely discovered more of that here at LMU. Self-discovery.

Extra: I don't take that many outside classes at all. I take Tango, and then, occasionally ballet over the summer, but not that intensely. I don't know what to say. I'd say people give a lot more attention to you at LMU perhaps. It's just a more close environment. You know, you have a lot more personal attention, like the teachers, especially like the full time, they get to know you, and know your style. They know you more personally than in the outside, non-LMU world. But then again, I don't take that many outside classes, so I don't know that for sure. Yeah. I would want to take more outside classes, and I think it would be good for me. To get different styles, and to learn from different teachers, and see what's out there. Rather than, like, modern, I know this modern, but I don't know everything else, and there's a lot more, I know that. But, uh, so it would be good for me to take more outside, it's just hard with time, you know. So, I just haven't been able to.

11.) Training: Starting in college, intensive training = three years.

Dance Major, Art Minor

Defining moment: Um, I don't think there was an exact moment that I decided dance was the thing, but uh, in high school I always played sports, and, um, it was like the basketball season, and it was going to be my Junior year, and I decided not to play basketball, and, I was working on a partner competition, and I always get injured playing sports, sprained ankles, and you know, so, I decided not to play basketball and focus more on dance. And that was a big fuss at my school, cause it was a small school, and like, "Nick's not going to play basketball", and, basketball was like the big thing at my school.

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Benefits: um, I'd say, like, huge, a really broad, a, like a big variety is what I'm trying to say, different styles. Different techniques, like different, um, like I've already taken a few different styles of modern, you know, and I never really. Like, when I first came to college, I didn't really, I was focused on like West Coast Swing, and I hadn't taken any modern, I had seen a little bit. And I was like, that's kind of weird, I don't really know what is going on with it. And then when I finally took it, I was like, this is awesome, and I really dug it. And now I've taken a bunch of different styles, and out of the dance styles I might pursue, I'd say that modern is definitely up there. And, if I didn't come to a university, I wouldn't have gotten that exposure, you know, so.

Career goals: Right now I'm studying Argentine Tango. And, I love that. It's awesome.

Where do you study that? We study, I study with Lisa, and we go off campus, we go to, we take private lessons from, these two teachers from Argentina, Miriam and Larici Hugopaty there like world renowned, there amazing. So, we're studying with them right now, and I'd like to do something with Tango. I'd love to, there's not really competition, cause it's from Argentina, and there's like Americanized Tango, which is like the whole Ballroom scene, and I'm not really into that. So, like perform the Tango, and then maybe open up a studio at some point. I think that would be really fun. A studio that is just Tango. Well, not necessarily, I would be open to having other types of dance, but it's definitely, I'd say a different environment, so, it might be hard to do that, you know. To have a Tango environment, and then also have like ballet kids running in and out every day...it just might clash a little bit, so I'd have to see. But, I'd be open to it. So, that's, that's kind of what I'm focusing on now, but I'd also, I really enjoy modern, like contemporary, like I love Holly's style. Um, so it's possible that I might try to pursue that, and go into a company or something. We'll see.

Biggest Influence: Um, I'd say, Mariam Hugo, for one, cause they kindof, for one they're amazing, and if I could reach that level, I would be thrilled. But also like, they teach out of their home, and they're doing really well with teaching Tango, they travel all over the world. Like, it hard for us to schedule lessons with them, because their always traveling, like they'll go to Spain Italy, or.

So you don't have a set, like Tuesday nights at eight? Well, we kind of do. We have Tuesday nights at seven thirty actually. But, uh, like sometimes they'll go out of town and we'll have to miss a week or so. But, uh, and they were like gone for awhile this summer. And so, like what they do, and how they've been successful is really inspiring. Also, maybe Holly I'd say. Because I love her style, and I also love her dedication, which is also inspiring.

Are you in workshop? I was last semester. This semester I'm in photography and it kind of like over laps, and I didn't know it was going to, so I was a little disappointed, so. But uh, hopefully, I'll be in the class next year, so.

But last semester was your first semester working with her? Yeah. And then I have Yoga too.

Favorite class/least favorite: Huh, I don't know if I can say this. Um, at LMU, right? Favorite class, can I give you two? Cause they're different styles. Um, Holly's workshop last semester, cause I love the style, and also, I really love Hassan's hip-hop class this semester. Cause that's, I've always wanted to do, like I've always loved hip-hop, like that class is so different than any hip-hop I've taken, you know. And like it gives the basics, like the basics of breaking, and stuff like that, and know one really offers that, I'd say. Like the way he breaks it down, so, that's a really, really fun class. Least favorite class... um, might actually be Sharon's modern class last semester. Um, it was kind of a hard class, cause I didn't really like the style, I didn't really like, it wasn't enjoyable for me. but, I'd say more than that, I kind of clashed with her, and like the way she taught, she really irritated me. I'd say it was more of a personal issue with her, and how she taught, but uh, that kind of ruined the class for me. Even though I didn't really like the style, it was really good for me. Like it improved me in different ways, just like being versatile, and all the different styles will help me be better in whatever I do. And uh, I knew that, and I was trying to focus on that, and uh, try to cut her out, you know she's teaching it however, and that's her thing, but it just really got in the way of it, and it just made the whole experience, the whole year actually, I took it for two semesters, just really crappy, so.

Strengths and weaknesses: Hum, um, I think that I can pick up movement really well. Like, choreography, and also like the style, and uh, like mimic it really well, and uh, not really well, but pretty well, I guess. And um, I can remember combinations well. I'd say, weaknesses, I always look down, so I need to look up, and project more. Um,

Even with Tango do you look down? Yeah. And it's also hard with Tango, cause Lisa's shorter than me, and I'll look at my feet sometimes, and then also if I'm just looking at her it's also kind of down, so it's easy to just drift to my feet. But, uh, I'm working on that, but that's definitely a weakness. I'd say I'm really dedicated, and I try really hard. So I'll focus, and I'm really determined, and I'll work til I get it. Maybe, also a down side of that, is if I don't get it, I'll

probably get frustrated.

Hurt/Sick and can't dance: Um, I would, love to do something with art. And also, I'm one of the student managers at the Lion's Den, cause I think, and I think it would be really awesome to have, to own a coffee shop someday. Like kind of, I was saying that I want to own a Tango studio, and I was thinking, like right below it, a coffee shop. So, that's kind of like the whole picture, so I guess I could do that. A small little hole in the wall, central perk style, or something like that. I think that would be fun.

Peer motivation: Do you mean like dancing with my peers? Or, like, my friends will be like, dance harder Nick!? Ha. Either. (Long Pause). I'd say, (pause) I don't know, I never really thought about it. But, uh, I'd say, the upper classmen motivate me more, now I'm starting to be an upper classmen. But, uh, it's always like, it's inspiring to see, you know what you can be. You know you want to look higher. You put yourself in a more advanced class, and you are going to progress faster. Um, I'd say it's a good environment to study in, so in that way it would inspire me. And uh, you know I've never done this, so I might be wrong, but it might be harder in the competition world, just like going out, it might, like, kind of wear on you. And being supportive of all your peers I'd say is definitely a good thing.

Um, I say yeah. I mean, I consider myself at the top of always pushing myself, but I guess in like any class you can see, see someone doing something in a different way, and just being in class with other people, if I wasn't at LMU, and I wasn't able to take all these classes, I would be exposed to that.

Most important things learned: Um, I'd say learning how to work with people, has been a big thing. Uh, learning how to be a roommate with people, along the same lines, maybe. But I lucked out with my roommates freshman year for sure. All the things I learned...my dance education I'd say is very valuable. Um, not really a specific thing, but just learning more about myself, and about who I am, I guess, you know. I think definitely discovered more of that here at LMU. Self-discovery.

Extra: I don't take that many outside classes at all. I take Tango, and then, occasionally ballet over the summer, but not that intensely. I don't know what to say. I'd say people give a lot more attention to you at LMU perhaps. It's just a more close environment. You know, you have a lot more personal attention, like the teachers, especially like the full time, they get to know you, and know your style. They know you more personally than in the outside, non-LMU world. But then again, I don't take that many outside classes, so I don't know that for sure. Yeah. I would want to take more outside classes, and I think it would be good for me. To get different styles, and to learn from different teachers, and see what's out there. Rather than, like, modern, I know this modern, but I don't know everything else, and there's a lot more, I know that. But, uh, so it would be good for me to take more outside, it's just hard with time, you know. So, I just haven't been able to.

12.) major- Dance, teaching track, beginning to follow the science track (but not fully on it)

age-20

year in school-Sophomore

years of dance training-17 years

1. Was there a defining moment when you knew that you wanted to pursue dance as more than just a hobby?

I don't think I have a defining moment, I think that um, I did train at the studios when I was younger, just like any other little girl, and um, when other hobbies would conflict with dance, like soccer, or a school play, or something like that, like I always put dance first, even as a little kid, so, um, when my mom, I think I was like seven or eight, and my mom was like you have to choose between what you want to do, like um, seriously, cause I was just doing everything, soccer and girlscouts and things like that, and I was like I want to do dance over everything, so then I kindof branched away from soccer, and like a little bit less time in other things, and I would probably say about eight or nine, although that's kinda young was definitely when I decided that I wanted dance to be a consistent part of my life, so I would definitely say that for sure, so at a pretty young age, it was just like um. And it didn't really have anything to do with teachers or like the type of dance, cause I was doing tap, ballet, I was doing everything, um I think it was just overall, the atmosphere of the dance studio and how dance just really made me feel, so that was my turning point, my moment.

2. What path have you followed to get where you are today?

I was a studio dancer, competing at local and national competitions. I started when I was in fourth grade like actually competing at competitions and representing the studio, and I did that up until about. And that's when I kindof stopped, um, going into tenth grade, competing for the studios, and I decided to go to the dance team, and perform for my highschool. And I started completing regionally and nationally with the dance team at my high school, and I did that tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade. I still took studio classes and stuff, I mean I was still in the studio two or three times a week on my own account, that wasn't like a requirement for the program. But, I didn't compete with the studios tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade, I stopped in ninth grade for that, but I was definitely involved with competitions for as long as I can remember. So that was definitely a big part of that path t

3. How did you decide on the dance program at LMU?

I really wanted to go to Cal State Long Beach, because all of my choreographers that I had known and admired had gone there, and they've always raved about the program, and I actually didn't get in. That was like honestly, the first time in my life where I had auditioned for something and I didn't get it. And I was in twelfth grade, it was the beginning of Senior year and I was like, oh my gosh, my life's over, what's happening. Maybe I shouldn't dance? Maybe it's just something I should keep on the side. Which in my heart I didn't want to believe that, but I

was like maybe this is the way it's supposed to be. And um, so one of my mentors I should say, that went to Long Beach State was like you should start looking at other schools, you know, you didn't make it, so maybe this is an opportunity to go somewhere else. And so, um, one of my friends was like, let's just go to some LMU...and I was like, what's LMU, I didn't even know what it was, and so I was all, What's LMU? And um, so, we came up here for the orientation, and I met Judy, and um, she was like, why don't you come back here next week and take a class? And, I was like, ok, it seems really, really cool. You know I loved everything about the campus when I finally got here, and looked at it, you know. And, uh, I took Paige's class, and I had never been so scared in my entire life, but I loved it. I loved the fact that I was so scared, and everything was so different, and, uh, I absolutely feel in love with Judy and what she had to say. And then I started, ah, I had like an interview with Scott, and everything he had to say to me really, just definitely clicked. Like what they were saying about the program, and how they really focus on the individual, like whole person, and it's more um, just a learning and growing experience, rather than like an expectation, with certain criteria you have to meet, as far as technique or you know. I just really liked their perspective on dance, and there were other schools I was looking at, like for awhile I thought I wanted to go to NYU, and then I actually went there, and it was the complete opposite of here. And I just, I think the turning point for LMU purposes, was, I think when I took Paige's class, and I saw everyone in the class, and I saw, um, I just kind of got this feeling from the room. And I think that is what did it for me. And I'm so glad that I didn't get into Long Beach, because if I would have gotten into Long Beach I wouldn't have looked any further, and I wouldn't have come here to look, so I'm so glad that I didn't make it, cause I would be a completely different person if I would've went there. And um, it definitely worked out for the best, and I'm kind of worried that I almost didn't go here, because I didn't notice it at first, because so many people were like, I want to go here, I want to go here. But because in high school I was never really like that, I just worked really hard, and just tried to keep all my options open, and um, I'm so glad that it worked out this way. I can't like even tell you how, I'm, I'm so happy with where I am here. Like from a university student opinion I'm so happy that I came here.

#### 4. Did you ever think of not going to college?

No. I mean I've always wanted to study dance, like at a completely different level than anything studio based or like dance team in high school. I like am so hungry to learn dance at like, in ways I haven't even thought of yet. Because I think that, since it is an art, people like look at it as a hobby, and there's so much more to it, um, so that's why I love studying it. I never, there's never been a day when I was like I'm not going to go to college. I've always been one of those people who wants to continue to learn. And since I have the opportunity, and like the support of my parents too, um, study at an expensive school, um I'm very blessed with that factor. But I think that even if I didn't have like the financial support I would find a way to keep pursuing the study of it.

#### 5. What benefits do you think you will have in the dance world having gone to college?

As far as, besides like the whole experience of college, which I think every person should

have the possibility to experience, because I think that I have changed so much as an individual, like, not in ways that like the eye would see as far as like my personality, but just like really getting to know, um, myself and what's important to me, and like why dance makes me happy? Why, um, you know like being, cause like you could be out on your own and not go to school, you could work and try to make a living that way and stuff without going to college, but I see different, um, in adults now, I see different, ah, I'm trying to think of how to explain this. I have, my mom has like a bunch of different friends. And like she has friends who went to college, and she has friends who have not, and I just see their different lifestyles, and I see, like, even just simple like communication skills, um, things that you don't learn in high school that you learn in college that aren't necessarily outside of the classroom, but there almost inside the classroom, because I feel like I'm always in class, even though I'm not in a dance studio or in a class. I feel like in college I'm just like this sponge and I'm absorbing this information, and knowledge, because everybody is so, um, has so much to teach. And we're only in this environment for, you know, a minimum of three to four years, and like within that time, I think that there has not been a time where I have not, there hasn't been a day, like whether it is a good day or a bad day, I haven't experienced something that I probably would never experience anywhere else. Um, and I think that it's that way, like whatever college you go to, whatever environment your in, and I think that if you're exposed to that, I just think that you benefit so much more overall in like life. Specifically, like in the dance world, the entertainment industry is not really looking at your degree, and there not really looking at your knowledge of the femur, you know, things that we're educated in here. But, um, I'm not really pursuing an entertainment career, I think my main focus is trying to teach dance correctly, and teach it from a more, um, like I was talking about before, from a more in depth view point, it's not just about us moving around, and it's not just these like skinny people, like you know, like jumping up and down, like that a lot of people think that it is. People think it's just a way of exercise, which you know those are certain factors that are stereotypical. But I really think that dance can be used as a huge educational tool, and a communication tool, that, um, would really make students feel more intelligent, and better about themselves, I think that, that's like my biggest thing, that I want students to feel good about themselves, and what they look like, and how they feel when they are moving there body. Not to feel that they are awkward, or they're not coordinated, because I really think there's, that you can always find something to bring out in them, and I think that dance can really help students, and really help people learn and feel better about themselves. Um, that's kind of my main focus to why I'm going to school, but for, I think just overall knowledge, um, is, to answer your question, as far as benefits, because you don't get the same knowledge that you get in a university, you do when you just go straight into a professional dance career. And, I don't even know what a professional dance career means, there's no, there's no steady paycheck, there's nothing steady at all in a professional dance career, so, um, and it's different for everyone, you know, it's just, it's such a one big experience, so, um, that's it. That doesn't really answer your question at all.

6. What are your career goals? Yeah. The whole, my career goals are definitely teaching, and I want to, um, I want to teach dance to students that maybe are not pursuing dance as a professional career. Um, like in the high school system. Because when I was in high school my dance teacher, I didn't have a very good experience with my dance teacher. Um, she like didn't

even know what a plie was, and she like claiming to be this phenomenal dancer, you know, and um, I want to create like a really positive atmosphere for students in like a dance type of way, I want them to, um, just be well aware of what dance is, and what it can do for them, it shouldn't be something that people are like intimidated by, or like they don't like it, because um, because it's not familiar. I really want to familiarize people that just are not dance savvy, ha, you know, just not your every day studio people, because I don't really see myself teaching like in a, I can see myself teaching in a studio, but I would rather, I would like to do both and see how it works, because um, I just think that dance is a really good source of education, like for a lot of different reasons. Um, so that's kind of like my biggest thing, I don't really plan on, um, like as of right now, I don't really plan on performing professionally, because honestly I don't think that I could ever make it, so, that's kind of, that's kind of like the, um, like the reality part of me. It's just like, there's no way you could be in like the entertainment or commercial part, you know, just because you not really that type, quote on quote, or you don't have that look. And then the other part of me, the amazing modern companies that are out there, and like, all the companies that I've seen, you know, my jaws like completely to the floor every time, I'm like, there's no way that I could ever, um, like get to that level, you know, just because um, yeah I don't know why, but that's, I mean it would be amazing to get to experience something like that, but my main focus is to really um be aware of like, ok, let me remind, I think in order to be a good teacher, you have to be really aware of your dancing abilities, like your own body, and your kinesphere, and I think that, um, everything that scientifically goes on within yourself, and I'm still definitely in the process of learning all about myself, I think it's going to take my entire four years here to actually be able to analyze and know myself completely, like from a dancers point of view, um, and I'm really striving to be aware of that before I leave, because there's people here, the faculty here, and the peers we have, are definitely um, like so helpful in just learning that, and just dealing with, um so many different things, and I think that I want to know myself so well, and be well aware of like everything that I'm capable of, to like let my energy lose of like everything I want to teach. I think that um if I'm going to um, be making corrections, I really want to make sure that I know exactly what is correct, not what I think would look right, you know or something like that. Especially with injuries occurring so much lately, and I've just really noticed it the past couple years, um, I really want to be, I keep calling it scientific, because like anatomy, and all that kind of stuff, is very scientific, and so, I really want to be very aware of um, like the conditioning, and the training and all that, and make sure I'm doing it in a way that's healthy, but beneficial and challenging at the same time, and that's a huge goal. But, um, I definitely want to be an instructor that um, is like scientifically correct, and not just doing like you know five hundred sit-ups because I think that is going to make your core stronger, you know something like that, cause I've had teachers that just kind of do whatever they want, and they haven't really studied like what this will do in the long run, like I don't want my students to have bad lower backs because I made them do something that could have been prevented. Which I don't see myself making my student do that. But, I've had teachers before that have been like, you just need to kick your leg to your face, and if you can't then we're going to put it there. And like, put it there?, what if it doesn't go because my hip rotators are only twenty-one degrees. Which I just learned two months ago. I have twenty-one degree turn-out, which is nothing. And average dancers like thirty, no it's like forty to sixty, and mine's like twenty-one. So, um, things like that...

Did you learn that from Marie Jose? Um, I learned it from Jane Dun in pilates, they like measured it and stuff. And she was like, you have to work in your hip rotation, otherwise your like really going to ruin your knees. And, I had no idea. So, I think at a young age, if I can teach students like, you just need to work with what you're given, and there like, well I don't even know what I'm given, so, if I have the ability to tell them what they are given, and to like really just celebrate what they have, um, then I think that the learning process of dance will be a lot better, because I find that when I come to a university level, you know people come in with injuries, or they come in with problems before that teachers had, had like, oh my teacher made me do this, so therefore I have bad knees, because we always did knee drops, and they never let us wear knee pads, you know, like crazy stuff like that, that you're like, are you crazy. Um, but when you're little you just listen to what the adult says. So, um, I think as far as, definitely as career goes, it's um teaching, and I really want, I really want high school students to have a very positive, um, self-image. I think that, and that kind of goes beyond dance, um because I really think that with celebrities today, and with like all of the craziness with eating disorders and things like that, and that happens a lot within the dance studios, I've seen it in the dance teams, and the companies I work for, it's like unbelievable, you know what happens with people. And, I really want to, almost, like end it all, but like that could take awhile, um I really want to create them, to honestly think of themselves, and not think negatively about themselves. Because I know that every dancer does no mater what. I'm totally guilty of it, but um, I'm hoping that um, I can get to that point, and then I can get my students to get to that point. Because I think that's really important, people get so caught up in everything, that I'm just worried about the next generation. Because right now it's getting so um, so popular to, um like weigh a hundred pounds, and people are doing extreme things, and so, um, I'm just really worried for the next generation, cause how low are we going to go? How unhealthy are we going to get, you know, I think a big thing too, um as far as a career and passion, passion for dance, because it's definitely a passion for healthy living and wellness, definitely after LMU I would like to continue studying, I have no idea where, um, but I'm definitely um, have a passion about healthy living and just being happy. And I think that definitely makes me happy, and I want people to experience happiness through being healthy, and stuff like that, so, yeah.